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The Queen's Crags

By Wilfrid Wilson Gibson

SCENE: *The Queen's Crags, a fantastic group of rocks and boulders on the fells.* MICHAEL CROZIER, *a young hind, lies in the evening glow at the foot of the tallest crag, with a far-away look in his eyes. Presently,* GEORGE DODD, *an old hind, enters from behind, and stops on seeing* MICHAEL.

GEORGE. Of all the lazy louts!
It's here, then, that you moon away the evenings,
Stretched like a collie, basking in the sun,
Your noble self for company!
At your age, Michael, lad,
I'd have thought shame to find myself alone,
A night like this . . .
And such a lass as Peggy, lonesome, too.
I wasted little time, when I was young;
And lost no Summer evenings by myself.
I always was a lad among the lasses,
And not a moony, moping gowk like you.
No sooner was I through,
Than I was washed and out.
Sunlight, moonlight, starlight, dark,
I never missed the screeching of the owls,
Nor listened to it lonesome.
But you, I've never seen you with a lass:

Though Peggy Haliburton, she . . .
Lad, take your pleasure, while you're young,
And Summer nights be fine . . .
Though youth and Summer nights seem long—
Long enough to last for ever,
For ever and a day,
Before you've looked about a bit,
Old age and Winter are upon you . . .
To-day, you're lithe and lusty,
And to-morrow,
A grizzled, pithless, aching bag-of-bones.
And Peggy Haliburton, too . . .
The lass was made for love and Summer nights:
Yet she's out walking with herself,
And no one by to see her but the peewits,
Or, maybe, a cock grouse or so . . .
A bonnie young thing wasting.

(*He pauses, looking at* MICHAEL, *who pays little heed, but still lies with a far-away look in his eyes.*)

But, maybe, Michael, you're like me;
And cannot 'bide red hair?
I never liked a red-haired wench,
If there was any other by.
Red . . . it's the colour of the fox and kestrel,
And stoat and weasel, and such thieves and vermin.
And, as for stock, if I could have my way,
I shouldn't have a red beast on the farm.
I'd never let a chestnut stallion whinney
Within a mile of Skarlindyke.
I'd sell all chestnut colts and fillies:
The red bull, too, should go:
And no red heifer should come nigh the byres.
I'd have all black, coal-black:
Black stallions, and black mares:
Black bulls, black stirks and heifers:
All black, save tups and ewes . . .
I'm somehow not so partial to black sheep.
But, in this world, we cannot all be farmers,
And lords of all creation.
Still, even hinds may have their fancies:
And you and I, lad, cannot 'bide red hair . . .
And so, red Peggy walks alone . . .
Aye! and it seems that hinds can hold their tongues,
At least, the youngsters can . . .
For my old tongue keeps wagging . . .
And wags to little purpose, seemingly.
It must have lost its sting . . .

Or, Peggy's not in favour.

(*A pause.*)

Well, Mister Mum, you've chosen a snug corner
To stretch your lazy bones in . . .

(*Sitting down by* MICHAEL, *with his back against the rock.*)

I think I'll bear you company, awhile . . .
If you can call a hedgehog company,
Tight-curled, and prickles, bristling!
Still, though you mayn't be over-lively,
You're livelier than Myself.
I find him but glum company—
A grumpy, sulky beggar,
Who keeps on telling me I'm getting old,
And 'minding me of happiness gone by.
Myself and I were never fellows . . .
But ill-yoked, at the best of times,
We seldom pulled together . . .
And, Lord! the times that we've upset the cart!
So you must serve to keep the peace between us,
By listening to my chatter . . .
I'm always happiest, talking,
For then I needn't listen to Myself. . . .
Though I, when I was your age, Michael,
I should have scorned an old man's company,
While any lass . . .
And on Midsummer Eve!

(*He pauses again: then resumes, pointing to a pillared rock, standing apart from the others.*)

So, yon's the tooth, chipped out of the Queen's comb,
When Arthur pitched a rock at her,
While she was combing out her yellow hair:
And he, at his own Crags, a mile away!
It must have been a spanker of a comb,
To bear so brave a tooth!
I wonder what she'd said, to make him pitch it . . .
Though, likely, she'd said nothing,
But just sat combing out her yellow hair,
And combing, combing, combing.
A woman with a devil in her tongue,
When she plays mum, is far more aggravating.
Sometimes, when Susan sits and combs her hair,
At night, like Arthur's Queen,
And combs, and combs,
Till I'm half-mad with watching from the bed,

I only stop Myself,—
The surly chap who wants the light out,—
Just in the nick of time
To loose the pillow from his clutch . . .
King Arthur must have been a handsome lad,
To chuck a pebble that size near a mile.
But, there were giants in those days:
And he . . .
MICHAEL. A lie!
GEORGE. A lie? Of course, it's all a lie:
But, it's a brave lie, Michael!
I doubt if ever there was King or Queen,
In these outlandish parts . . .
MICHAEL. There was a Queen . . .
Though she was not a giant . . .
She was no bigger than . . .
Than you, or me . . .
Or Peggy . . . she was nearer Peggy's height.
GEORGE. You seem to know a deal about her Michael.
Just Peggy's height?
And red-haired, too, I'll warrant?
You've found your tongue:
And got it pat:
And all the gospel truth!
But, how d'you come by so much truth, I wonder?
Scarcely by honest means, I doubt.
And how d'you know . . .
MICHAEL. Because I've seen her.
GEORGE. Who?
MICHAEL. The Queen.
GEORGE. You've seen the Queen?
Well, that's a brave one, Michael!
Myself can sometimes tell a little one;
But he was ever but a craven liar.
His were but cheepy bantams, barely hatched:
While yours, why, it's a strutting cock, and crowing,
Comb pricked, and hackles quivering!
There's nothing like a big, bold, brazen lie
To warm the blood . . .
MICHAEL. I'm telling truth.
I've seen her twice.
GEORGE. Nay! stop, before you spoil it all.
A lie, blown out too big, will burst.
MICHAEL. It is no lie . . .
I saw the Queen, herself.
GEORGE. You saw her . . . where?
MICHAEL. I saw her here.
GEORGE. Here? In the Crags?

I trust she's not here, now:
And listening down behind the rock.
Lord! if she'd heard Myself about the combing!
But Queens should be above eavesdropping;
And know the luck of listeners . . .
Though, how d'you know her, lad, for Arthur's Queen?
Did she sing out:
"Hi! lad, I'm Arthur's Queen!"
MICHAEL. She wore a crown . . .
A golden crown . . .
GEORGE. I saw a Queen, once, with a golden crown;
And sitting on a golden throne,
Set high upon a monster golden ball,
Drawn in a golden chariot through the streets
By four-and-twenty little piebald ponies,
At Morton, on a fairday, long ago . . .
Aye, long ago, in my young days,
When circuses were circuses.
They made a brave procession through the town,
To draw the folk in after them . . .
Though outside shows are usually the bravest . . .
But, not that time . . .
She was a Queen, a black-eyed, gypsy Queen . . .
Black eyes that sparked . . .
And tilted chin . . .
You never saw . . .
MICHAEL. Mine was no circus-queen.
I saw her first, when I was but a boy,
Six years ago, to-day . . . Midsummer Eve . . .
I'd spent the whole day, playing round the Crags
At kings and castles,
Crowning or killing,
Or conquering myself,
Or putting black-faced bands
Of robber-sheep to rout;
Or seeking to take, unawares,
Some traitor stoat or weasel
That spied on my dominions.
When, ere I knew,
The sky was black,
And broke in flame,
And burst in thunder . . .
And rain, such rain . . .
Lightning, flash on flash . . .
Thunder, brattle after brattle . . .
Rain and rain . . .
You never saw such rain—
One pelting, crashing, teeming, drenching downpour. .

Soaked to the skin, in no time,
And scared out of my senses,
I crept into a hole among the rocks,
A hole I'd never spied before,
No bigger than a fox's earth.
I had to wriggle on my belly,
To squeeze myself in, head first;
And half-expecting, every moment,
To feel a vixen's teeth . . . .
Though more I feared the lightning at my heels.
When, all at once, my arms were free:
And, lifting up my head, I found
I'd almost crawled into a chamber,
A big square chamber in the rock,
That I had ne'er heard tell of . . .
Four blue and shiny walls, that soared
Sheer to the sky . . . a still and starry sky,
Though, in the world without, black storm was raging . . .
But, I'd no eyes for stars,
Nor even wits to wonder at the quiet . . .
My eyes were on the Queen,
Who sat beside a hearth of burning peats,
Right in the middle of the chamber . . .
A golden crown upon her golden head . . .
And she was spinning golden wool,
That flickered in the firelight,
Until it seemed that she was spinning flame,
Or her own fire-bright hair.

GEORGE. Red hair! And she'd red hair . . .

Then, you had only snoozed;
And dreamt of Peggy.
I saw my Queen by daylight.

MICHAEL. Peggy!

I tell you, 'twas the Queen.
I saw her, plainly as I see yon rabbit.
She wore a furry cloak of weasel skins,
Or something like . . .
Though round the neck 'twas white—
White as yon rabbit's scut . . .
For it was mortal cold in that stone chamber.

GEORGE. Was anybody with her?

MICHAEL. I only saw the Queen . . .
And her, but for a moment.
She lifted up her eyes . . .
And I was frightened . . .
And wriggled backwards like an adder,
Till I was in the storm again.
And then, I scuttled home—

A rabbit to its warren—
Across the splashy heather:
The lightning, playing round my heels . . .
The thunder, rattling round my head . . .
Though it was not the lightning or the thunder
That scared me now . . .
I'd not a thought for them . . .
My heart was flying from that quiet chamber,
That stone-cold chamber, roofed with quiet stars . . .
And from the eyes . . .
The eyes I had not seen.

GEORGE. And where's this stony chamber, then?

MICHAEL. I never found the way to it, again,
Though I've ransacked the Crags for it,
Since I grew big, and bolder.

GEORGE. A vixen, in her den . . .
For she'd be red enough . . .
Yet . . . you'd have felt her teeth, for certain!
It must have been a dream.

MICHAEL. I might have thought so, too,
Had I not seen the Queen, again.

GEORGE. Again? . . .
I saw my Queen, again, too.
But, what was your Queen's name?

MICHAEL. Queen Guenevere.

GEORGE. Mine had a braver name.
They called her, Donna Bella di Braganza,
Castillian Queen of the Equestrian World . . .
I spelled it out upon the rainbow bills
The clown, who wagged the tail of the procession,
Was scattering from his donkey-cart.
I saw my Queen, again . . .
My gypsy Queen!
My black-haired, black-eyed gypsy . . .
You, and your red-haired Queens!
I'd give a world of red-haired Gueneveres,
To see those gypsy eyes again . . .

(*A pause.*)

I smell the sawdust now . . . and oranges . . .
'Twas in the tent . . .
She'd doffed her robes and crown . . .
I knew her by the flashing of her eyes,
Tripping nimbly int' the ring,
So brave in yellow silk, skin-fitting silk,
Yellow as dandelions . . .
And sprinkled all with spangles . . .
And yellow ribbons in her hair,
Her jet-black hair that hung about her shoulders.

I see her tripping now into the ring,
With flashing eyes and teeth,
Clean-limbed, and mettlesome as the coal-black mare,
Coal-black from mane to fetlocks,
That pawed and champed to greet her . . .
And there's naught bonnier than a bonnie mare . . .
She clapped its glossy neck . . .
It nuzzled her . . .
Then, ere I knew . . .
She'd 'lighted on its flanks,
Nimble and springy as a thistle-down . . .
And they were racing round the ring together . . .
She, standing tip-toe . . .
And with ne'er a rein . . .
A straw between her teeth,
Her flashing teeth . . .
And tilted chin . . .
And flashing eyes . . .
Her beautiful, long hair, as black and silky,
As black and silky as the mare's long mane,
Was streaming out behind . . .
And ribbons streaming . . .
And spangles sparkling . . .
And sawdust, flying . . .
And whips, a-cracking . . .
And music, playing . . .
And now, she sprang
Through flaming hoops . . .
And my heart, through the fire with her . . .
And lighted on the steamy flanks:
And on, and on . . .
And round, and round the ring . . .
Till I was dazzled dizzy,
And out of breath, but watching her.
And what, with crack of whips . . .
And thudding thresh of hoofs . . .
And smell of spirting sawdust . . .
And crash of drums and trumpets . . .
And flaming hoops of fire . . .
And flying hair . . .
And yellow ribbons . . .
Flashing teeth . . .
And flashing eyes . . .
My blood was mad, was mad for her,
I wanted to be flying round,
For ever flying round with her,
For ever, and for ever . . .
I wanted her . . .

As I have never wanted woman,
Before or since . . .

(*A pause.*)

And yet, I've little doubt
That she'd have been a poor hand with the porridge;
And poorer at the milking . . .
Though she could manage horses . . .
And, maybe, 'twas as well
That I walked home that night with Susan.
Within the year, we'd wedded.
There's naught amiss with Susan's porridge.
And she could milk a stone.
She's been a good and careful wife enough.
She never spares herself . . . nor me.
Though, I dare say, I'm even more a trial
To her, than to myself . . .
And, though I'm often harking back,
And sometimes hanker . . .
Somehow, I cannot see the Donna Bella,
In yellow skin-tights, cleaning out the byre!
And yet . . .

MICHAEL. I saw Queen Guenevere, again . . .
Three years ago upon Midsummer Eve.
She sat upon a little hill, and sang:
And combed her long red hair, beside the Lough—
Just sitting like a leveret in the sun
To sleek its fur—
And all about her, jack-snipe darted, drumming.
She combed her long red hair
That tumbled down her shoulders . . .
Her long hair, red as bracken,
As bracken in October . . .
And with a gleam of wind in it . . .
A light of running water . . .
Her crown was in the heather, at her feet:
And, now and then, a jack-snipe perched upon it;
And with his long neb preened his gleaming feathers,
As if to mock the Queen,
Queen Guenevere, a-combing her long hair
That tumbled o'er a gown of blue . . .
As blue and shimmery as a mallard's neck . . .
And with a light of running water:
And, as she sang, 'twas like the curlew calling . . .
And rippled through my heart like curlew calling . . .
Like curlew calling in the month of April . . .
And with a clear cool noise of running water.

I dropped upon my belly in the bracken:

And lay and watched her, combing her red hair:
And hearkened to her singing . . .
And I was sorry, when she'd done, at last,
And took her long red hair, and twisted it,
And fixed it with a golden pin.
Though she'd but little need of crown,
Whose hair was golden crown enough,
She stooped to take her gold crown from the heather,
And set it on her brow:
Then stood upright . . .
Stood like a birch-tree in the wind . . .
A silver birch-tree in the sunset wind
That ripples through its leaves like running water . . .
The little jack-snipe all about her drumming . . .
And then, I looked into her eyes,
Looked into golden pools,
Pools, golden 'neath October bracken . . .
And int' the heart of fire . . .

(*Pause.*)

A shrew's cold muzzle touched my hand,
Among the bracken, startling me . . .
And she was gone . . .

GEORGE (*after a pause*). And so, the leveret bolted . . .
You never saw her more?
So all tales end . . .
At least, the true tales told by life itself . . .
Though I . . . I saw my Queen again . . .
Yet . . . with a difference . . .
'Twas at the next fair after I was married.
I thought I'd like a glimpse of her once more:
Though I had much ado, persuading Susan . . .
She'd never been inside a circus:
And thought it sorry waste of silver.
But, once inside the tent,
She liked it well enough:
And gaped and grinned her money's worth.
And I . . . I sat, and waited,
And waited for my gypsy . . .
And snuffed the smell of sawdust:
While Susan giggled at the clown—
A yellow-legged old corncrake—
And nudged me with her elbow;
And asked me if I'd ever heard the like.
But, I'd no ears nor eyes
For any, save my gypsy . . .
And she . . . she never came.
Another woman rode the coal-black mare—
A red-haired jumping-jenny—

And there was cracking whips . . .
And sawdust flying . . .
Drums and trumpets . . .
Flaming hoops . . .
And all the razzle-dazzle . . .
But not my black-eyed gypsy.
And I sat, waiting still, when all was over,
Until the tent was empty . . .
Sat waiting for the Donna Bella . . .
Till Susan tugged me by the jacket,
And asked if I'd sit gaping there all night.
She got me out, at last.
And then . . . I met her . . .
Met her, face to face,
My gypsy Queen!
But, oh! . . . how changed . . .
Except her eyes . . .
I knew her by her eyes:
For they still flashed and sparkled,
Though she was bent and hunched,
And hobbled with a crutch . . .
She'd had a tumble, since I'd seen her flying
Around the ring, as light as thistledown . . .
She clutched me with a skinny hand,
Wanting to tell my fortune . . .
But Susan wouldn't let her:
She said, a married man had got his fortune;
So needn't waste his earnings.
The gypsy bit the straw between her teeth,
Her flashing teeth . . .
And, tilting her proud chin,
She laughed at that, with merry eyes
Twinkling 'neath her yellow kerchief—
Dandelion-yellow—
Bound about her jet-black hair,
The hair that I'd seen flying free . . .
And when she laughed,
And looked into my eyes . . .
The heather was afire . . .
I could have caught her to me,
There and then . . .
Whipped her up, and run with her
To the world's end, and over . . .
But, Susan . . . dragging on my arm . . .
Aye! broken as she was,
And hunched, and hobbling,
I would have wedded her outright,
Had it not been for Susan . . .

I lost her in the crowd . . .
And never saw her more . . .

(*Pause.*)

And so, went home to decent porridge:
And 'twas as well, maybe.
A man must have his meat, if he's to work,
And victuals count for much.
And Susan's ever been a careful wife.
And had no easy time of it . . .

(*Pause.*)

But, love's a queer thing, Michael.
It comes to you . . . like that!

(*Striking his hands together.*)

I've known a man walk seven miles each night
To see a woman's shadow on the blind . . .
And, in the end,
It's one, and one alone, that holds you,
Be 't Donna Bella, Guenevere, or Peggy.

(*Pause.*)

But you . . . you never saw your red-haired Queen,
A-combing her long hair again, I'll warrant.

MICHAEL (*slowly, as in a trance*). I saw her once, upon Midsummer Eve,
Six years ago . . .
I saw her, twice, upon Midsummer Eve,
Three years ago . . .
I'll see her thrice . . .

GEORGE. And, it's Midsummer Eve!

MICHAEL (*listening*). And nigh the hour . . .
And, hark, the jack-snipe drumming!

GEORGE. You cannot think . . .
It's all a pack of lies . . .
Or else, you're daft, clean daft!
Your eyes are queer and wild . . .
You do not see her now?
No! No! I thought not!
It's all stuff and nonsense,
Your silly tale about a red-haired Queen,
Who's been dead dust a thousand years, or more.

MICHAEL (*leaping to his feet*). She's coming . . . coming now . . .

GEORGE (*leaping up, too, and gripping Michael's arm*). No! No!
You're crazy, surely . . .
Yet . . . queer things happen on the fells, at times . . .

And on Midsummer Eve . . .
MICHAEL (*listening more intently*). She's drawing slowly nearer . . .
I hear her silks a-rustling through the grass . . .
GEORGE (*listening too*). I seem to hear . . .
What are you gaping at?
MICHAEL (*looking up*). The Queen! The Queen!

(*They both stand, spellbound, gazing at a woman standing on the crest of a boulder, burning like a golden flame in the last rays of the setting sun. Presently, looking down, and seeing them, she laughs.*)

GEORGE (*shaking himself, while Michael still stands, spellbound*). It's Peggy Haliburton, after all!
PEGGY. And who else did you take me for?
And why d'you both stand gaping . . .
GEORGE. Why, Michael said: 'twas Arthur's Queen . . .
He called her some outlandish name . . .
And said, she'd long red foxy hair . . .
And eyes like pools . . .
And sang just like the curlew . . .
But he'll be telling you himself . . .
For, all along, I knew 'twas you he meant.
Men's tongues wax madly on Midsummer Eve:
And I've been talking, too . . .
A pack of nonsense . . .
As Michael, here, could tell you,
If he'd not too much sense to heed
An old man's witless blathering.
Well . . . I had best be going;
And getting home to Susan.
She doesn't hold with owls, and such like.

(*He goes.* MICHAEL *still stands tranced, and looking up, until the light fades.*)

MICHAEL (*as one waking from a dream*). Peggy!
PEGGY. Yes, Michael.
MICHAEL. Peggy, I've never seen you, until now . . .
Though I have seen you every day . . .
There is a difference, somehow . . .
PEGGY (*coming down from the rock*). Maybe it's not in me . . . the difference,
But in your eyesight.
You never looked upon me with such eyes
Before . . .

No one has looked upon me with such eyes . . .

(*A pause.*)

And yet, in you I see no difference, Michael.

MICHAEL (*taking her in his arms*). No difference, Peggy?

PEGGY. None! for I saw you,
The first time I set eyes on you.
I've not been blind.

1913

By Frederic Harrison

THE year 1913 opens a new era. The whole international system has to be recast. And our own foreign relations, our policy, even our tactics, have at least to be overhauled, reconsidered, revised. Our internal system is alike under resettlement; but we have first to look to the most urgent question, which is international.

It is, of course, merely fanciful, and no one can regard it seriously, that 1913 should mark a great recasting of the European State system, just as 1813 marked the downfall of Napoleon's Imperial ambition; just as 1713, by the Peace of Utrecht, marked the collapse of the ascendancy of Louis Quatorze. Early in 1813 the European kingdoms had closed in upon France, and Napoleonism was in its last throes. In 1713, by the Treaties of Utrecht, Northern Europe had finally shaken off the tyranny of the Bourbons. A new century, *plus* that ominous *thirteen*, seems to have something in it of fate.

A superficial view might suggest that the fact that a combination of four very small States has overthrown an effete oppression which has long been regarded as moribund, was not so important a change that it could unsettle the relations of the Great Powers, having more than ten times the resources and the population of the Balkan kinglets. That is plausible, but unsound.

The history of the Turkish Empire for more than a hundred years, its extraordinary combination of races, and, above all, its wonderful geographical position astride the Eastern Mediterranean, have always made its condition and its relations to be of prime importance to the European Powers. Its fall as a great European Power inevitably affects them all.

But that is only the first point. Next comes the intricate interlacing of the Balkan States (five, when we include

Rumania); each with three forms of Christian religion, all usually jealous and hostile to each other, to say nothing of two non-Christian races, Mussulman and Jewish, and even Gipsies and born desperadoes. Nowhere on earth are race ambition, race hatred, ancestral feuds, and bloodthirsty vendettas more rife. These petty kingdoms, these turbulent races, touch the frontiers of Russia, of Austria, and of Italy, and even stir the kindred races within these greater Powers by wild hopes and ferocious passions. Study a race map of Eastern Europe and see how Rumania, with a Hohenzollern dynasty and a very miscellaneous Vlach race, impinges on Russia and on Austria; how Bulgaria, with a Coburg Tsar, jostles Rumania and Servia; how Bulgaria and Servia lie along and control the Lower Danube; how Greece claims and is embedded in Macedonia; how Servia ranges with the Austrian frontier; how Rumania, Bulgaria, and Servia all rouse intense enthusiasms and rancorous jealousies among kindred or hostile races within the dominions of Russia, Hungary, and Austria. These three nations for generations have been kept in periodical ferments by the restless populations of the same race across their frontiers. How can Russia, Austria, Hungary remain unmoved, when the physical, material, and moral *status* of their Balkan neighbours is utterly transformed?

Add to this that Russia's very existence may be staked on its defending a Slavonic nationality; that Germany, by treaty and in self-defence, is pledged to defend its Austrian ally; whilst France, for the same reasons, is bound to defend her Russian ally. And, again, add the fact that England, as the great trading and Mediterranean Power, and France and Italy, as hardly second to England in trade and Mediterranean interests, are all three deeply concerned in the issue of this war.

Thus, to Russia the defence of Slavonian interests, the freedom of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, is what sea-power is to England. To the Germans of Austria, to the Magyars of Hungary, the predominance of the Slave races is their deposition as ascendant peoples. To Germany, to allow the Germans of Austria to be deposed from Empire is an intolerable blow to Pan-Germanic dreams. To Magyars, to have the despised Servians prospering and advancing, whilst they are pinned between Germans, Poles,

Russians, and Rumanians, is a sorry prospect for a proud race. To England it is of vital importance that the Black Sea, the Bosphorus, the Hellespont, and the Ægean coasts and islands, should not be in hostile hands. To France and to Italy this is nearly as vital. Could the Powers of Europe, great and small, be knotted up together in a more intricate entanglement—a series of vicious circles more insoluble?

It is vain for worthy people, absorbed in the future of International Arbitration and Social Reform, to tell us that the Balkan settlement is nothing to us—only a petty local squabble, that Turkey has only herself to thank, that England has nothing to lose or to gain in Eastern Europe. Let us get on here, they say, with our land reform and insurance benefits. That is the cry of ignorant faddism, of hidebound blindness.

It may be that Servia itself is nothing to us, and we may not care if her pigs are sent to the Adriatic or to the Ægean ports. But if the aggrandisement of Servia means dissolution and anarchy to Austria-Hungary, if an Austrian attack on Servia would shake the very dynasty of the Romanoffs on its base, if the gigantic armies of Germany were called out to defend Austria, if France could not risk the catastrophe or endure the shame of allowing Russia to be crushed, if England could not stand aside and potter over Land Bills and several Home Rule Bills whilst the Triple Alliance made itself masters of Europe—well, then, is that nothing to a democratic House of Commons, with universal, or, it may be, adult suffrage? Is all this nothing to us? Yet all this we might possibly see in this year of grace—or year of fate—1913.

Whatever may be the arrangements made at the close of this sensational war, they can be but temporary at best, and may only lay down the material for a struggle even more desperate and for changes even greater than those of this resettlement of international relations. What 1912 seems to have effected is a vast aggrandisement of the Slavonic races in their secular struggle against the Teutonic races. Even a local and temporary triumph of Austria over Servia cannot cancel the fact that henceforth the way south-east to the Black Sea and the Ægean Sea is barred to the German.

Across the extreme south-east corner of Europe, and on the highway to Asia Minor, Syria, and the Nile, henceforth there will lie Slavonic races of surprising energy and ambition; and the natural and inevitable head of these races, by religion, tradition, and origin, is the enormous Russian Empire of 164,000,000. Until a few weeks ago the Teuton had a predominant prestige, a working *entente*, and immense interests from the Upper Danube, the Oder, and the Elbe, right away to the Marmora, the Ægean, and the Upper Euphrates. The *prestige*, the *entente* are gone. And across the path there now lies a big, warlike, adventurous Slavonic Confederacy, looking to the Russian Tsar as its natural protector and head. This vast increment to the Slave world and decrement to the Teutonic world has taken place in a few weeks, without a shot being fired or a diplomatic *ultimatum* sent by any of the Greater Powers. It seems automatic—a decree of Providence.

To Austria, to Germany, this may well seem to be an interest touching their national future. To England, or France, or Italy, it is hardly a vital concern, though it is of real importance to each of them, what is to be the Power that controls the Ægean Sea, its islands and shores, and the two straits which open on it from the North. For more than a century it has been the dream of the Russian to be master of all this; and for more than a century Western Europe has barred him back. He is not there yet. But how much more near to his dream—and your Slave is the most dreamy and most long-memoried soul in Europe—has the year 1912 brought him at last?

But will the Teuton see all this patiently and unmoved? No! How can he? We have seen how the Hapsburg Emperor deals with his petty Servian neighbour, whose two or three millions of people, even with a few miles of coast, can hardly *per se* trouble the Austro-Hungarian Empire. And we have seen how the Hohenzollern Emperor tells the world in plain terms: "Who attacks Austria, attacks me." We cannot say that this is criminal—however terrible may be the consequences. It is not even unreasonable. Given the circumstances *as they are*, and apart from any question of responsibility for those circumstances, the warning seems such as the average German patriot, *with the ideas now dominant*, can hardly refuse to back. And yet withal, if

we remember how passionate is the Russian's pride in his Slave race, how the Russian alliance is for the average Frenchman a necessity of national existence, we cannot shut our eyes to the awful prospect of conflict between the Triple Alliance and the Double Alliance to which all this seems to bring us face to face.

Here we are up against the hard root of the whole international problem ever since the coming of Bismarck some fifty years ago. The key of European politics is the magnificent organisation of Germany for war, industry, and science—its central position in mid-Europe abutting on seven different States—its poor access to the sea and its expanding population, hidebound on every side by hostile and suspicious neighbours, and, to crown all, its limitless pride, ambition, and thirst for dominion. A mighty nation of 65,000,000, with such superb resources both for peace and war, and such overweening pride in its own superiority and might, finds itself closed up in a ring-fence too narrow for its fecundity as for its pretensions, constructed more by history, geography, and circumstances than by design—a fence maintained by the fears rather than the hostility of its weaker neighbours. That is the rumbling subterranean volcano on which the European State system rests.

If the German Empire consisted entirely of its peaceful and laborious peasants, of its ingenious and indefatigable workers in a thousand industries—still more, if its Socialist workmen could control, or modify, or check her external policy—or even if the Kaiser could always, at all times, insist on doing nothing but what he judged to be both prudent and wise—if all this were so, the enormous strength of the German Empire would cause no uneasiness to its neighbours.

But we know that this *if* never can be verified in our time. Over and above its sixty millions of peaceable, industrious people, there are many millions of ambitious and fighting patriots who nurse visions of aggrandisement, battle, and glory. There are hundreds of thousands of proud and fierce Samurai (the sole survivors in Europe of its feudal chivalry) who live only for war and are bred for war, and have no profession or career but arms. This immense hereditary caste, which has every quality befitting

a dominant order, has in effect permanent control of the whole civil and military organisation of the Empire. Associated with it is an intellectual order, even more arrogant, but not so pugnacious, which holds control over literature and education.

The Kaiser is the official organ of this mighty bureaucracy; and in ordinary seasons and for business purposes he is its master, and can and does control and use it. But under a storm of patriotic delirium in the warrior and bureaucratic caste, voiced by professors, journalists, plutocrats, and speculators, there is little hope that the War Lord could resist the pressure to give the signal for war—at least, as Bismarck and his successors prefer to do—to take some step which implies war.

We know all that is so often urged on us to the contrary. We are weary of hearing of international visits, of royal and academic courtesies, of the peaceful virtues of German tradesmen, of the friendly professions of official Germany, of the aversion to war in the whole middle class and Socialist mass. No one denies this. We all know that for some years yet peace is almost a condition of German development both military and commercial, and especially in the marine. We concede all this as proved, axiomatic, common ground. Ninety per cent. of the German people ardently desire to be at peace—*so long as German interests are not affected.* The whole Government machine works for peace—*at present.* The Kaiser is honestly doing his best to remove all apprehension from his neighbours' minds —*until some crisis compels him to speak.* And all the while the predominant ten per cent. of the nation are pushing on their countrymen to take a course of which war is the almost inevitable consequence.

It is inevitable but that a nation with the magnificent resources of the German, hemmed in a territory so inadequate to their needs and pretensions, and dominated by a soldier, bureaucratic, and literary caste, all deeply imbued with the Bismarckian doctrine, should thirst to extend their dominions and their power at any sacrifice—of life, of wealth, and of justice. One must take facts as they are, and it is idle to be blind to facts, or to rail against them. It is as silly to gloss over manifest perils as it is to preach moralities about them. There they are.

Now, such is the geographical situation of the German Empire; so late has it been in consolidation, so recent its great accession of power and of pretensions—only half a century, and therefore at least a century later than England, France, Austria, and Russia—that it seems a hopeless dilemma to see in what quarter outside Europe the burning ambition—we may almost say the natural ambition—of New Germany can be met. There is no district on earth available for an adequate transmarine empire, or even colony. And the desperate efforts made by Germans for a generation to find some suitable outlet for their population and their ambitions, whether territorial or industrial, only arouse opposition and apprehension—which Germans regard as hostility. One after another the adventures in the Pacific, in South America, in the West Indies, in Morocco, in South-West Africa, in Central Africa, seem to have brought nothing but disappointment to themselves and fresh alarm to their neighbours. And now the latest and perhaps most practicable of all these schemes, *i.e.*, in Asiatic Turkey, seems to be finally barred, and by their secular rivals, the Slaves.

This collapse of Turkey, this aggrandisement of the Balkan kingdoms, is a rude disillusion and a fatal setback to Pan-German ideals, whether in Austria or in the Reich. Nothing outside Europe is now open to them. Asia, India, China, Australasia, Africa, America—North and South, all are closed—practically inaccessible and impregnable. And now the Bosphorus, the Ægean, and Asia Minor are equally closed. But, alas! Europe is open—and within touch—and, even if occupied, offers magnificent fields for enterprise of all kinds. It is therefore inevitable that the mighty German Empire, swollen perhaps by the German part of Austria, will seek "compensation" for its exclusion from places "in the sun"—within Europe itself. It has won "compensations" and accessions thrice before—in 1864, in 1866, in 1870; and four or five times since by demanding fresh "compensations," it has brought Europe to the brink of war. We have to see what are the compensations it demands in 1913.

No man with a trained eye for politics need trouble himself with those who dispute all this. Party scribes, keen about their Liberal Bills; Radicals with stale watchwords

for Economy, Sex-Equality, and Universal Peace; Cosmopolitan Financiers who are welcomed at foreign Courts; "Able Editors" who pore over the division lists; all those who have close ties with Germans, whether by family connections, by trade interests, by academic intercourse—all such are wont to vaunt the sweet reasonableness of all German classes, the enormous commercial disasters which war would cause—above all, the English sympathies and the pacific temper of his Majesty the Kaiser.

All this may be true—but it is entirely beside the point. These well-meaning "pacifists," as they are called, may have excellent relatives, friends, correspondents and partners in Germany, but they are not politicians themselves, and they know nothing of the true German politicians who have power. It is waste of time to answer this stuff.

For my part, I have been an active politician for quite fifty years, and all that time in close touch with leading politicians and publicists in all parts of Europe. No man with deep political interests has been more entirely detached from any party allegiance. For fifty years I have publicly contended for raising the conditions and wages of the labouring masses. For fifty years I have resisted every attempt at national expansion, aggression on weaker races, and every form of warlike adventure. Every interest I have, every principle I have maintained, is now against anything like antagonism, or even rivalry, towards a foreign nation; is, indeed, strongly on the side of international harmony, goodwill, and peace. I do not now budge one inch from that ground. And yet, I say it deliberately and sorrowfully to-day, England, Europe, civilisation is in imminent peril from German expansion.

In what quarter is the peril probable, and in which way is it to be met? Now, more than ever, it is to be looked for in Europe, after the great changes made, and others imminent, in South-East Europe. With our fleet in the highest state of development, anything like attack upon it, or on these islands, may be reasonably put aside. It is not indeed impossible, especially under the new conditions of aerial machines. And due preparation must be made to meet it. But the far more imminent risk is that Belgium, Northern France, Holland, either one or all, may be the object of assault; or in the case of the Low Countries, of

practical control without actual war. We know that systematic preparation for this has long been made. From the point of view of the Navy League and the Bernhardi strategists, the control of the lands drained by the Ems, the Rhine, the Meuse, and the Scheldt, is vital to an expanding Germany. To be able to use these ports and railways for military purposes, even without annexation, would be to Germany a new empire—would be what the Bosphorus, the Marmora, and the Dardanelles would be to Russia. The temptation to a mighty Power, shut out from East and from South on the planet, is quite dazzling. A Pan-German who resists the bait may well "wonder at his own moderation," as Clive said.

Now, even the "control" of any parts of Belgium and of Holland—obtained by diplomacy or extorted by pressure—would be, *under present circumstances*, so formidable a menace to France that she could not submit to it without a strenuous effort. Could England submit to it, or refuse to join her efforts with France; and much more so if annexation or complete alliance were in question, rather than "control"? This—not invasion or maritime war—is the practical peril to which the *entente* is exposed. We might some day see the lands between the Helder and the Somme in effect dominated by our great rival on the sea.

Granted, that it would be a most tremendous adventure even for Germany; that Belgians and Dutch would resist as far as they could; that William II. is convinced of the need of present peace, and has his fleet still to complete. Granted, that for some years yet no such scheme could be attempted. Germany is not ready; the mass of the German people is not willing; the Kaiser, who is no Charles X. of Sweden, would not listen to it. Still, this is what the effective leaders of German policy are maturing to-day, and within five, seven, ten years may be able to force upon their Emperor and their nation, in spite of all obstacles, of the awful sacrifices involved, and the solid aversion to war of the admirable German people.

How is such an attempt to be met? Of course, I make no pretence to offer any opinion on purely military or naval problems. But armaments depend on policy; and in this country politicians have the ultimate decision of all matters of defence. I can speak only as a veteran politician and

historian. And in a few pages I can only roughly state the heads. With all practical men, I assume that our Navy is in a splendid condition, that it is prepared to guarantee these islands against invasion. Whether it is strong enough to guarantee the whole of our vast Imperial dominions is another thing. To keep from any interruption our wide trade routes; to defend the diverse lines along which our food arrives; to protect our American, West Indian, Australian possessions; to be dominant in the Mediterranean; to hold Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, Alexandria, Suez, Aden, the Canal, the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf, Bombay, Calcutta, Hong Kong, Chinese and Japanese waters, and all the spots dotted red on the world's map; to say that our Fleet is adequate for all this, in face of the perpetual increase of the German and Austrian navies; all this is to me ignorant, almost insane, delusion. To me this incalculable task would demand a fleet fifty per cent. stronger than ours; and if we built such a fleet, we could not man it.

No man of ordinary good sense can read the masterly statement of the Admiralty (Cd. 6513), just presented to Canada—and to the Empire—without seeing that, as our Navy *now stands*, it is a meagre resource for its enormous responsibilities all over the planet; and that, *at its present rate of development*, it will be utterly inadequate for its liabilities, and even far too weak to defend these islands in the year 1920. In seven years then, by the official estimate of the Admiralty, our island will be at the mercy of Continental Navies, *if our own remains on its actual scheme*. To this the answer of those who cling to the idiotic drivel known as the "Great Illusion" is that our good and peaceful friends will not be so wicked as to disturb us; indeed, they would lose money if they did! Can any man of sense study this official forecast, the German Navy Laws and the programmes of their Navy League and their Bernhardi warriors, and still hold to this? The Peace Conferences of 1913 may open their eyes.

In any case, a predominant Fleet, the largest that we can man, is the condition of existence of the Empire; and destruction of the Empire by war would mean starvation, ruin, chaos within these islands. An immense and continuous increase to our Navy,

for some years to come, is a matter of life and death to our people. The Radical and Labour pedants who seek to reduce it are guilty of an attempt on our country's life. Like the Jews who shouted for Barabbas and delivered Christ to death, they seem to cry out: "The blood be on us, and on our children!"

I assume that our Home Defence, adequately developed on the lines promised by the Government, and further enlarged in the ways I presently explain, *with an enlarged Fleet*, will make us tolerably secure in these islands. But the whole purpose of this paper is to urge that what we want now is a fully trained, fully equipped, expeditionary Army to support our friends across the Channel and prevent the shores of it being held by an enemy.

This is no question of meeting any of the great Continental armies in battle alone, but of forming a striking head to the Navy and causing a diversion for an ally. It is absurd to deny that some 250,000 British troops in well-equipped army-corps, a landing force from the Fleet and supported by it—say at Flushing, Antwerp, Calais, or Havre—would not be of prime importance to any nation attacked from the east. It is not serious to talk about a Navy being sufficient by itself. Our country has never pretended to take part in any European question without a land army. Even in Cromwell's time the Ironsides landed on the Continent; so we did in the time of Marlborough, of Chatham, and of Wellington. All main national issues must be decided on land, as the Japanese soon found. A fleet can prepare the ground, but an army only can bring to fruition the final result. The problem to-day is not Home Defence, but domination in Europe. And the battle has to be fought on land. An island which obstinately condemns itself to be nothing but an island, limits itself to the second or third rank in the European State-system and chooses to remain simply a pawn.

The burning question of Compulsory National Service is thus not raised at all in this paper. For the immediate purpose in hand it lies entirely outside discussion. And that for two reasons:—

(1) For immediate use it is impracticable.
(2) It does not give us what we now want.
(1) It is impracticable because it is evident that, short

of a fierce civil war, neither party could impose it by law on the labouring masses. If politicians would only take the measure of the passionate denunciations by the Labour leaders, and also of the official renunciation of it by the present Government, it must be clear that, for the next ten years at least, it is not a practical question—not more within reasonable distance of law than the Single Tax, Nationalisation of Railways, or abolition of property in land.

(2) But the essential point is that the scheme or schemes of National Service (and they are constantly being varied and developed) do not propose what is a vital necessity of the hour. Before the year 1918—at latest the year 1920—the great stress will come. I say this because neither Germany nor any Continental Power can maintain the awful strain upon their manhood and their industry for many years more. It may be soon—it must be well within a decade—that England will need to have ready a strong, seasoned, equipped expeditionary force. It may be called for within three years; and, to be of use, within a fortnight after open war. The idea of troops learning to shoot in the six months after war is begun may pair off with the Great Delusion that war is a perfectly useless waste of good money! Now, to train growing lads for a month or two may be an excellent thing, and in a generation might be an invaluable reserve. But it cannot give us *within the next few years* an army *fit to serve abroad*.

The party in power has now formally staked itself to the Voluntary principle of Service. For the present we must accept that. For they who think that any party, any possible government, can, *within the next few years*, pass a Compulsory Service, are like the "Mad Hatters" who babble about carrying Tariff Reform without an election victory *ad hoc*. Let us be serious. Politics, alas! are beset with idle dreams. And those who are awake know that Compulsion cannot be carried either in this or in the next Parliament. But *now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation! At present we must do what we can with a Voluntary system.

It is too true that the Voluntary system, *as it stands*, is utterly insufficient. We want more seamen, more soldiers, more Territorials—above all, we want more trained officers

—more well-seasoned non-coms, more professional subalterns, more scientific tacticians. We want what Germany has.

Let us begin with the latter. The worst and most ominous break-down in our military system is the growing dearth of army officers. Under the old stereotyped system, with only some 10,000 officers on active service, with almost no real scientific training, and all drawn from the landed, wealthy, and professional classes, we got along with their pluck, their private income, their social *prestige*. If only a percentage of them made soldiering a real profession, their own high qualities and popularity enabled them to do their work. And when the bulk of these gallant gentlemen retired to their estates and their pleasant retreats, there were plenty of fine fellows ready to take their places. It was a service of rich men, or of leisured men of good breeding who lived with rich men, and had rich wives and rich relatives. It was an honourable career, and there were good men enough to fill it.

All that is changed. The landed and professional classes, who had the monopoly of Army service, are now very much poorer. They are not rich enough to send their sons into a career which is not a living profession. The monstrous, scandalous extravagance and luxury of the cavalry and some other branches excludes all but those who are too rich and comfortable to stick to it as a profession. Commands are restricted by tradition to a limited order which is rapidly becoming too poor to serve for their lives at their own cost.

Above all, the imperative need of a severe scientific training scares away the leisured men who used to love arms. The examination mill—the hard intellectual work in any case indispensable—drives away thousands of fine fellows who have neither brains nor patience for systematic study. The German Junker caste has an unlimited supply of splendid young men who yearn for a military profession and will give it their whole lives and inexhaustible hard work. Our Junker caste is now too poor, or too prone to leisure, pleasure, and ignorance, to fill the service. All that must go. The Army must be open to all Englishmen, even if neither well born nor well bred.

The non-coms are capital fellows; but we have not

enough of them; and the service does not offer inducements to able and ambitious men. If officers, as in Germany and France, had to serve in the ranks and rise gradually from corporals to generals, and were all adequately paid to make it a real profession, we could get all we want. We know the old idea of our Army being officered exclusively by "gentlemen." But gentlemen will not now serve in the numbers we need; and many "gentlemen" would be of little use if they did serve. Privates, non-coms, subalterns, must be got to make the Army their profession, and in order to do so, they must be paid enough to make it a profession We have just raised the pay of the Navy; the doctors are still on strike for better pay. The Army must be better paid—better paid all round, at least up to Colonels, and open to all Englishmen who can fit themselves for command. To do this we must get rid of the wanton habits of extravagance, not only encouraged, but imposed in "crack" regiments, the silly, sham, aristocratic tone of most regiments, and the vulgar prejudice that every officer must be a "gentleman-born," or at least passed from a "public school." It was the want of officers of the lower ranks, and the miserable ignorance of those they had, which has just ruined the Turks and led tens of thousands of fine soldiers to death and shame. It would be monstrous if the British Army is to be starved and under-manned by the insufferable snobbery of Smart Society, which expects its captains to keep a team of blood horses and to be useful at its house-parties.

There are plenty of men willing to serve, if they can only see their way to a decent living and a settled career. Officers of all ranks ought to begin in the ranks and work their way up by good service, and be well paid whilst they serve. There are enough men to fill the Army, the Reserve, and the Territorials, if only they were offered an open career and adequate pay. It is a matter of money. If all Territorials could earn good money by weeks and months of really hard work at the butts and in camp, and also had special inducements to serve, the establishment would be filled even on the present basis. Every man who had satisfied his commanding officers might be allowed to wear an arm badge even in civilian life.

But apart from any compulsion, a very effective method

of pressure might be brought to bear. Make it a rule that no appointment in the entire Civil Service staff, from F.O. clerks down to office messengers and Postal employees, should be made unless the applicant had a good badge for some form of Army service. Great companies and private trade houses would follow suit. If a personal mark of honour, solid pocket-money and outfit, and hundreds of thousands of places in all ranks were offered to men who had served the country, the Territorials would overflow without any need of forcing unwilling men by Act of Parliament.

It will need many Parliaments and fierce struggles ere Universal Service is made law. We do not want now a Citizen Army of one or two millions, and we could not organise or officer them if we had them. We do want a Navy at least 30 per cent. more than we have, even with all the Colonial offers and the "dark" Indian project, over which the Press is so jubilant. We want a European Army of at least 250,000 long-service men, and about twice that number of Reserve and Territorials. And above all we want more competent officers, from sergeants up to colonels.

Oh! but this is awful—impossible, they will say—worse than a new Lloyd George Budget! Yes, impossible *as things are*. But I do deliberately advocate a new *War Loan* of at least 150 millions, to be spent freely at once, say 100 millions on the Navy and 50 millions on the Army. The problem is really one of money. And I quite agree that even the heroic methods of our Chancellor could not raise such a sum to be spent in five or seven years. Why stick at a War Loan any more than our fathers did in Napoleon's time? The mere offer of such a Loan would be covered five times over; and would make even the Bernhardis bite their moustaches. Lord Haldane, who, as all agree, has done all that man could do *with the limits and conditions imposed on his party*, has told us that it is a matter of money, that he could not better the Army without taking money from the Navy, and *vice versâ*. That is quite true, with *our actual taxation*. Our fathers had a ten per cent. income tax all round. If we cannot stand that, the answer is: resort as they did also, to a big War Loan.

I am quite prepared for the outcry which this would

meet in the world of fossil Radicalism and Labour Socialism. Nor am I at all satisfied that even these heroic efforts would save the Empire in its present monstrous dimensions. But there are other steps much easier to work, perhaps even more heroic, but, as we Positivists hold, both more just and quite indispensable. I mean to concentrate our defence on our home and vital national interests. The huge, disconnected, anomalous units scattered over the planet and nicknamed Empire, may be held provisionally, provided its very existence, our Navy, our neighbours, and our very life were not being challenged by a formidable rival. But, in the actual condition of the European Powers, and the policy they systematically pursue, it is a wild delusion to hope that this island, even with its Colonies on the other side of the earth, can undertake such enormous, such unlimited, such incalculable responsibilities.

Let us concentrate, let us draw in this Empire, whilst there is yet time, even as Rome did when the Romans-born no longer filled her legions, when the provinces could bear no further taxes, and when masses of her workers cared little for War or for Empire. Our case is not wholly dissimilar. Goths, Vandals, Teutons, Huns are gathered in millions around us. Our outlying provinces and conquests, however tempting, are no longer within our power to defend. The Mediterranean is now a mere trap. It is idle to think that one, or even two, Army Corps—with a battle squadron—could be spared out there on African coasts, if we had to defend our island and our food supplies. And it is idle to suppose that such a moderate force could suffice against a really great attack from Mediterranean Powers; and who knows how soon German armies may be at Trieste?

The Mediterranean must be given up, stock and block, and with it, yes, even Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, and, of course, Egypt. For thirty years I have maintained that Egypt will be our death-trap—Egypt and that absurd African "Empire" south of it—it will be our grave if we seek to leave there 10,000, 20,000, even 30,000 good men, whilst we are fighting for our lives in Europe. It cannot be done, if our island has to be fed. Of course, to withdraw from Egypt—a criminal adventure into which we were dragged by financiers, Indian soldiers, and Bismarck—means that we must look to reach India round the Cape.

No rational politician or soldier could trust the Canal, or ever has trusted the Canal, in a great war. India itself is now not menaced; and we have much still to do in India before we leave it. But we must gradually prepare to hand over its defence to Indian chiefs and troops, and withdraw by degrees our European soldiers.

We might well bring home 40,000 good, seasoned men. We may soon want them at home. South Africa, Australia, Canada, can well defend themselves. It is little we can do for them—for Canada absolutely nothing, if attacked by the great Republic—and it is little that any of them can spare for us. The boast that Trans-Atlantic and Trans-Equatorial, or Far-Eastern possessions are going to save the Old Country if attacked by great European Powers is mere Yellow-Press swagger.

In bitterness and sadness I foresee an imminent peril which I shall not live to witness. I am neither alarmist nor faint of heart. I am an ardent lover of our Fatherland and full of confidence in her sons' courage and strength. For forty years now I have foretold the German peril and have denounced the Imperial adventures into which we have been misled. And I challenge my critics to show a point in which, in forty years, I have been false to our principles, or where my forecasts have proved to be wrong.

A tremendous crisis is before us. And they who are blind to it or refuse to meet it may be guilty of one of the most awful catastrophes in history. The violent destruction of our Empire by enemies implies the destruction of our whole financial and industrial system. That means ruin to commerce, trade, manufactures; starvation, want, and chaos to our whole Labour world. All my life I have fought for Labour causes, and I hold fast still to all measures of social reform. May I not live to see Labour and Reform in sheer ignorance and class-egotism bring about its own irrevocable ruin.

The Bluebottle*

By Henri Fabre

To purge the earth of death's impurities and cause deceased animal matter to be once more numbered among the treasures of life there are hosts of sausage-queens, including, in our part of the world, the Bluebottle (*Calliphora vomitaria*, Lin.) and the Chequered Flesh-Fly (*Sarcophaga carnaria*, Lin.). Everyone knows the first, the big, dark-blue Fly who, after effecting her designs in the ill-watched meat-safe, settles on our window-panes and keeps up a solemn buzzing, anxious to be off in the sun and ripen a fresh emission of germs. How does she lay her eggs, the origin of the loathsome maggot that battens poisonously on our provisions, whether of game or butcher's meat? What are her stratagems and how can we foil them? This is what I propose to investigate.

The Bluebottle frequents our homes during autumn and a part of winter, until the cold becomes severe; but her appearance in the fields dates back much earlier. On the first fine day in February, we shall see her warming herself, chillily, against the sunny walls. In April, I notice her in considerable numbers on the laurestinus-shrubs. It is here that she seems to pair, while sipping the sugary exudations of the small white flowers. The whole of the summer season is spent out of doors, in brief flights from one refreshment-bar to the next. When autumn comes, with its game, she makes her way into our houses and remains until the hard frosts.

This suits my stay-at-home habits and especially my legs, which are bending under the weight of years. I need not run after the subjects of my present study; they call on me. Besides, I have vigilant assistants. The household

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knows of my plans. Every one brings me, in a little screw of paper, the noisy visitor just captured against the panes.

Thus do I fill my vivarium, which consists of a large, bell-shaped cage of wire-gauze, standing in an earthenware pan full of sand. A mug containing honey is the dining-room of the establishment. Here the captives come to recruit themselves in their hours of leisure. To occupy their maternal cares, I employ small birds—Chaffinches, Linnets, Sparrows—brought down, in the enclosure, by my son's gun.

I have just served up a Linnet shot two days ago. I next place in the cage a Bluebottle, one only, to avoid confusion. Her fat belly proclaims the advent of a laying-time. An hour later, when the excitement of being put in prison is allayed, my captive is in labour. With eager, jerky steps, she explores the morsel of game, goes from the head to the tail, returns from the tail to the head, repeats the action several times and at last settles near an eye, a dimmed eye sunk into its socket.

The ovipositor bends at a right angle and dives into the junction of the beak, straight down to the root. Then the eggs are emitted for nearly half-an-hour. The layer, utterly absorbed in her serious business, remains stationary and impassive and is easily observed through my lens. A movement on my part would doubtless scare her; but my restful presence gives her no anxiety. I am nothing to her.

The discharge does not go on continuously until the ovaries are exhausted; it is intermittent and performed in so many packets. Several times over, the Fly leaves the bird's beak and comes to take a rest upon the wire-gauze, where she brushes her hind-legs one against the other. In particular, before using it again, she cleans, smooths and polishes her laying-tool, the probe that places the eggs. Then, feeling her womb still teeming, she returns to the same spot at the joint of the beak. The delivery is resumed, to cease presently and then begin anew. A couple of hours are thus spent in alternate standing near the eye and resting on the wire-gauze.

At last it is over. The Fly does not go back to the bird, a proof that the ovaries are exhausted. The next day, she is dead. The eggs are dabbed in a continuous layer at the entrance to the throat, at the root of the tongue, on

the membrane of the palate. Their number appears considerable; the whole inside of the gullet is white with them. I fix a little wooden prop between the two mandibles of the beak, to keep them open and enable me to see what happens.

I learn in this way that the hatching takes place in a couple of days. As soon as they are born, the young vermin, a swarming mass, leave the place where they are and disappear down the throat. To enquire further into the work is useless for the moment. We shall learn more about it later, under conditions that make examination easier.

The beak of the bird invaded was closed at the start, as far as the natural contact of the mandibles allowed. There remained a narrow slit at the base, sufficient at most to admit the passage of a horse-hair. It was through this that the laying was performed. Lengthening her ovipositor like a telescope, the mother inserted the point of her implement, a point slightly hardened with a horny armour. The fineness of the probe equals the fineness of the aperture. But, if the beak were entirely closed, where would the eggs be laid then?

With a tied thread, I keep the two mandibles in absolute contact; and I place a second Bluebottle in the presence of the Linnet, which the colonists have already entered by the beak. This time, the laying takes place on one of the eyes, between the lid and the eye-ball. At the hatching, which again occurs a couple of days later, the grubs make their way into the fleshy depths of the socket. The eyes and the beak, therefore, form the two chief entrances into feathered game.

There are others; and these are the wounds. I cover the Linnet's head with a paper hood, which will prevent invasion through the beak and eyes. I serve it, under the wire-gauze bell, to a third egg-layer. The bird has been struck by a shot in the breast, but the sore is not bleeding: no outer stain marks the injured spot. Moreover, I am careful to arrange the feathers, to smooth them with a hair-pencil, so that the bird looks quite smart and has every appearance of being untouched.

The Fly is soon there. She inspects the Linnet from end to end; with her front tarsi she fumbles at the breast

and belly. It is a sort of auscultation by sense of touch. The insect becomes aware of what is under the feathers by the manner in which these react. If scent comes to her assistance, it can only be very slightly, for the game is not yet high. The wound is soon found. No drop of blood is near it, for it is closed by a plug of down rammed into it by the shot. The Fly takes up her position without separating the feathers or uncovering the wound. She remains here for two hours without stirring, motionless, with her abdomen concealed beneath the plumage. My eager curiosity does not distract her for a moment from her business.

When she has finished, I take her place. There is nothing either on the skin or at the mouth of the wound. I have to withdraw the downy plug and dig to some depth before discovering the eggs. The ovipositor has therefore lengthened its extensible tube and pushed beyond the feather stopper driven in by the lead. The eggs are in one packet: they number about three hundred.

When the beak and eyes are rendered inaccessible, when the body, moreover, has no wounds, the laying still takes place, but, this time, in a hesitating and niggardly fashion, I pluck the bird completely, the better to watch what happens; also, I cover the head with a paper hood to close the usual means of access. For a long time, with jerky steps, the mother explores the body in every direction; she takes her stand by preference on the head, which she sounds by tapping on it with her front tarsi. She knows that the openings which she needs are there, under the paper; but she also knows how frail are her grubs, how powerless to pierce their way through the strange obstacle which stops her as well and interferes with the work of her ovipositor. The cowl inspires her with profound distrust. Despite the tempting bait of the veiled head, not an egg is laid on the wrapper, slight though it may be.

Weary of vain attempts to get round this obstacle, the Fly at last decides in favour of other points, but not on the breast, belly or back, where the hide would seem too tough and the light too intrusive. She needs dark hiding-places, corners where the skin is very delicate. The spots chosen are the cavity of the axilla, corresponding with our armpit, and the crease where the thigh joins the belly. Eggs are

laid in both places, but not many, showing that the groin and the axilla are adopted only reluctantly and for lack of a better spot.

With an unplucked bird, also hooded, the same experiment failed: the feathers prevent the Fly from slipping into those deep places. Let us add, in conclusion, that, on a skinned bird, or simply on a piece of butcher's meat, the laying is effected on any part whatever, provided that it be dark. The murkiest corners are the favourite ones.

It follows from all this that, to lay the eggs, the Bluebottle picks out either naked wounds or else the mucous membranes of the mouth or eyes, which are not protected by a skin of any thickness. She also needs darkness. We shall see the reasons for her preference later on.

The perfect efficiency of the paper bag, which prevents the inroads of the worms through the eye-sockets or the beak, suggests a similar experiment with the whole bird. It is a matter of wrapping the body in a sort of artificial skin which will be as discouraging to the Fly as the natural skin. Linnets, some with deep wounds, others almost intact, are placed one by one in paper envelopes similar to those in which the nursery-gardener keeps his seeds, envelopes just folded, without being stuck. The paper is quite ordinary and of middling thickness. Torn pieces of newspaper serve the purpose.

These sheaths, with the corpses inside them, are freely exposed to the air, on the table in my study, where they are visited, according to the time of day, in dense shade and in bright sunlight. Attracted by the effluvia from the dead meat, the Bluebottles haunt my laboratory, the windows of which are always open. I see them daily alighting on the envelopes and very busily exploring them, apprised of the contents by the gamy smell. Their incessant coming and going is a sign of intense cupidity; and yet none of them decides to lay on the bags. They do not even attempt to slide their ovipositor through the slits of the folds. The favourable season passes and not an egg is laid on the tempting wrappers. All the mothers abstain, judging the slender obstacle of the paper to be more than the vermin will be able to overcome. This caution on the Fly's part does not at all surprise me: motherhood everywhere has gleams of great perspicacity.

What does astonish me is the following result: the parcels containing the Linnets are left for a whole year uncovered on the table: they remain there for a second year and a third. I inspect the contents from time to time. The little birds are intact, with unrumpled feathers, free from smell, dry and light, like mummies. They have become not decomposed, but mummified.

I expected to see them putrefying, running into sanies, like corpses left to rot in the open air. On the contrary, the birds have dried and hardened, without undergoing any change. What did they want for their putrefaction? Simply the intervention of the Fly. The maggot, therefore, is the primary cause of dissolution after death; it is, above all, the putrefactive chemist.

A conclusion not devoid of value may be drawn from my paper game-bags. In our markets, especially in those of the South, the game is hung unprotected from the hooks on the stalls. Larks strung up by the dozen with a wire through their nostrils, Thrushes, Plovers, Teal, Partridges, Snipe, in short, all the glories of the spit which the autumn migration brings us, remain for days and weeks at the mercy of the Flies. The buyer allows himself to be tempted by a goodly exterior; he makes his purchase and, back at home, just when the bird is being prepared for roasting, he discovers that the promised dainty is alive with vermin. O horror! There is nothing for it but to throw the loathsome, verminous thing away.

The Bluebottle is the culprit here. Everybody knows it; and nobody thinks of seriously shaking off her tyranny: not the retailer, nor the wholesale dealer, nor the killer of the game. What is wanted to keep the worms out? Hardly anything: to slip each bird into a paper sheath. If this precaution were taken at the start, before the Flies arrive, any game would be safe and could be left indefinitely to attain the degree of ripeness required by the epicure's palate.

Stuffed with olives and myrtle-berries, the Corsican Blackbirds are exquisite eating. We sometimes receive them at Orange, layers of them, packed in baskets in which the air circulates freely and each contained in a paper wrapper. They are in a state of perfect preservation, com-

plying with the most exacting demands of the kitchen. I congratulate the nameless shipper who conceived the bright idea of clothing his Blackbirds in paper. Will his example find imitators? I doubt it.

There is, of course, a serious objection to this method of preservation. In its paper shroud, the article is invisible; it is not enticing; it does not inform the passer-by of its nature and qualities. There is one resource left which would leave the bird uncovered: simply to case the head in a paper cap. The head being the part most threatened, because of the mucous of the throat and eyes, it would be sufficient, as a rule, to protect it, in order to keep off the Flies and thwart their attempts.

Let us continue to study the Bluebottle, while varying our means of information. A tin, about four inches deep, contains a piece of butcher's meat. The lid is not put in quite straight and leaves a narrow slit at one point of its circumference, allowing, at most, of the passage of a fine needle. When the bait begins to give off a gamy scent, the mothers come, singly or in numbers. They are attracted by the odour, which, transmitted through a thin crevice, hardly reaches the nostrils.

They explore the metal receptacle for some time, seeking for an entrance. Finding naught that enables them to reach the coveted morsel, they decide to lay their eggs on the tin, just beside the aperture. Sometimes, when the width of the passages allows for it, they insert the ovipositor into the tin and lay the eggs inside, on the very edges of the slit. Whether outside or in, the eggs are dabbed down in a fairly regular and absolutely white layer. I, as it were, shovel them up with a little paper scoop. I thus obtain all the germs that I require for my experiments, eggs bearing no trace of the stains which would be inevitable if I had to collect them on tainted meat.

We have seen the Bluebottle refusing to lay her eggs on the paper bag, notwithstanding the carrion fumes of the Linnet enclosed; yet now, without hesitation, she lays them on a sheet of metal. Can the nature of the floor make any difference to her? I replace the tin lid by a paper cover stretched and pasted over the orifice. With the point of my knife, I make a narrow slit in this new lid. That is quite enough: the parent accepts the paper.

What determined her, therefore, is not simply the smell, which can easily be perceived, even through the uncut paper, but, above all, the crevice, which will provide an entrance for the vermin, hatched outside, near the narrow passage. The maggots' mother has her own logic, her prudent foresight. She knows how feeble her wee grubs will be, how powerless to cut their way through an obstacle of any resistance; and so, despite the temptation of the smell, she refrains from laying so long as she finds no entrance through which the new-born worms can slip unaided.

I wanted to know whether the colour, the shininess, the degree of hardness and other qualities of the obstacle would influence the decision of a mother obliged to lay her eggs under exceptional conditions. With this object in view, I employed small jars, each baited with a bit of butcher's meat. The respective lids were made of different coloured paper, of oil-skin, or of some of that tin-foil, with its gold or coppery sheen, which is used for sealing liqueur-bottles. On not one of these covers did the mothers stop, with any desire to dump their eggs down; but, from the moment that the knife made the narrow slit, all the lids were, sooner or later, visited and all, sooner or later, received the white shower somewhere near the gash. The look of the obstacle, therefore, does not count; dull or brilliant, drab or coloured: these are details of no importance; the thing that matters is that there should be a passage to allow the grubs to enter.

Though hatched outside, at a distance from the coveted morsel, the new-born worms are well able to find their refectory. As they release themselves from the egg, without hesitation—so accurate is their scent—they slip beneath the edge of the ill-joined lid, or through the passage cut by the knife. Behold them entering upon their promised land, their reeking paradise.

Eager to arrive, do they drop from the top of the wall? Not they! Slowly creeping, they make their way down the side of the jar; they use their fore-part, ever in quest of information, as a crutch and grapnel in one. They reach the meat and at once instal themselves upon it.

Let us continue our investigation, varying the conditions. A large test-tube, measuring nine inches high, is baited, at the bottom, with a lump of butcher's meat. It is closed with wire-gauze, whose meshes are too close to permit

of the Fly's passage. The Bluebottle comes to my apparatus, guided by scent rather than sight. She hastens to the test-tube, whose contents are veiled under an opaque cover, with the same alacrity as to the open tube. The invisible attracts her quite as much as the visible.

She stays a while on the lattice of the mouth, inspects it attentively; but, whether because circumstances have failed to serve me, or because the wire network inspires her with distrust, I never saw her dab her eggs upon it for certain. As her evidence was doubtful, I had recourse to the Flesh-fly (*Sarcophaga carnaria*).

This Fly is less finikin in her preparations, she has more faith in the strength of her worms, which are born ready-formed and vigorous,* and easily shows me what I wish to see. She explores the trellis-work, chooses a mesh through which she inserts the tip of her abdomen and, undisturbed by my presence, emits, one after the other, a certain number of grubs, some ten or so. True, her visits will be repeated, increasing the family at a rate of which I am ignorant.

The new-born worms, thanks to a slight viscidity, cling for a moment to the wire-gauze; they swarm, wriggle, release themselves and leap into the chasm. It is a nine-inch drop at least. When this is done, the mother makes off, knowing for a certainty that her offspring will shift for themselves. If they fall on the meat, well and good; if they fall elsewhere, they can reach the morsel by crawling.

This confidence in the unknown factor of the precipice, with no indication but that of smell, deserves fuller investigation. From what height will the Flesh-fly dare to let her children drop? I top the test-tube with another tube. The mouth is closed either with wire-gauze, or with a paper cover with a slight cut in it. Altogether, the apparatus measures twenty-five inches in height. No matter: the fall is not serious for the lithe backs of the young grubs; and, in a few days, the test-tube is filled with larvæ, in which it is easy to recognise the Flesh-fly's family by the fringed coronet that opens and shuts at the maggot's stern like the petals of a little flower. I did not see the mother operating: I was not there at the time; but there is no doubt

* The Flesh-fly is a viviparous insect, that is to say, she brings forth living grubs instead of eggs.—*Translator's Note.*

possible of her coming nor of the great dive taken by the family: the contents of the test-tube furnish me with a duly-authenticated certificate.

I admire the leap and, to obtain one better still, I replace the tube by another, so that the apparatus now stands forty-six inches high. The column is erected at a spot frequented by Flies, in a dim light. Its mouth, closed with a wire-gauze cover, reaches the level of various other appliances, test-tubes and jars, which are already stocked or awaiting their colony of vermin. When the position is well-known to the Flies, I remove the other tubes and leave the column standing by itself, lest the visitors should turn aside to easier ground.

From time to time, the Bluebottle and the Flesh-fly perch on the trellis-work, make a short investigation and then decamp. Throughout the summer season, for three whole months, the apparatus remains where it is, without any result: never a worm. What is the reason? Does the stench of the meat not spread, coming from that depth? Certainly it spreads: it is unmistakable to my dulled nostrils and still more so to the nostrils of my children, whom I call to witness. Then why does the Flesh-fly, who but now was dropping her grubs from a considerable height, refuse to let them fall from the top of a column twice as high? Does she fear lest her worms should be bruised by an excessive drop? There is nothing about her to point to anxiety aroused by the length of the shaft. I never see her explore the tube or take its size. She stands on the trellised orifice and there the matter ends. Can she be apprised of the depth of the chasm by the comparative faintness of the offensive odours that arise from it? Can the sense of smell measure the distance and judge whether it be acceptable or not? Perhaps.

The fact remains that, despite the attraction of the scent, the Flesh-fly does not expose her worms to disproportionate falls. Can she know beforehand that, when the chrysalids break, her winged family, knocking with a sudden flight against the sides of a tall chimney, will be unable to get out? This foresight would be in agreement with the rules which order maternal instinct according to future needs.

But, when the fall does not exceed a certain depth, the budding worms of the Flesh-fly are dropped without a

qualm, as all our experiments show. This principle has a practical application which is not without its value in matters of domestic economy. It is as well that the wonders of entomology should sometimes give us a hint of commonplace utility.

The usual meat-safe is a sort of large cage with a top and bottom of wood and four wire-gauze sides. Hooks fixed into the top are used whereby to hang pieces which we wish to protect from the Flies. Often, so as to employ the space to the best advantage, these pieces are simply laid on the floor of the cage. With these arrangements, are we sure of warding off the Fly and her vermin?

Not at all. We may protect ourselves against the Bluebottle, who is not much inclined to lay her eggs at a distance from the meat; but there is still the Flesh-fly, who is more venturesome and goes more briskly to work and who will slip the grubs through a hole in the meshes and drop them inside the safe. Agile as they are and well able to crawl, the worms will easily reach anything on the floor; the only things secure from their attacks will be the pieces hanging from the ceiling. It is not in the nature of maggots to explore the heights, especially if this means climbing down a string as well.

People also use wire-gauze dish-covers. The trellised dome protects the contents even less than does the meat-safe. The Flesh-fly takes no heed of it. She can drop her worms through the meshes on the covered joint.

Then what are we to do? Nothing could be simpler. We need only wrap the birds which we wish to preserve—Thrushes, Partridges, Snipe and so on—in separate paper envelopes; and the same with our beef and mutton. This defensive armour alone, while leaving ample room for the air to circulate, makes any invasion by the worms impossible, even without a cover or a meat-safe: not that paper possesses any special preservative virtues, but solely because it forms an impenetrable barrier. The Bluebottle carefully refrains from laying her eggs upon it and the Flesh-fly from bringing forth her offspring, both of them knowing that their new-born young are incapable of penetrating the obstacle.

Paper is equally successful in our strife against the Moths, those plagues of our furs and clothes. To keep

away these wholesale ravagers, people generally use camphor, naphthaline, tobacco, bunches of lavender and other strong-scented remedies. Without wishing to malign those preservatives, we are bound to admit that the means employed are none too effective. The smell does very little to prevent the havoc of the Moths.

I would therefore advise our housewives, instead of all this chemist's stuff, to use newspapers of a suitable shape and size. Take whatever you wish to protect—your furs, your flannel or your clothes—and pack each article carefully in a newspaper, joining the edges with a double fold, well pinned. If this joining is properly done, the Moth will never get inside. Since my advice has been taken and this method employed, the old damage has never been repeated in my household.

To return to the Fly. A piece of meat is hidden in a jar under a layer of fine, dry sand, a finger's-breadth thick. The jar has a wide mouth and is left quite open. Let whoso come that will, attracted by the smell. The Bluebottles are not long in inspecting what I have prepared for them: they enter the jar, go out and come back again, enquiring into the invisible thing revealed by its fragrance. A diligent watch enables me to see them fussing about, exploring the sandy expanse, tapping it with their feet, sounding it with their proboscis. I leave the visitors undisturbed for a fortnight or three weeks. None of them lays any eggs.

This is a repetition of what the paper bag, with its dead bird, showed me. The Flies refuse to lay on the sand, apparently for the same reasons. The paper was considered an obstacle which the frail vermin would not be able to overcome. With sand the case is worse. Its grittiness would hurt the new-born weaklings, its dryness would absorb the moisture indispensable to their movements. Later, when preparing for the metamorphosis, when their strength has come to them, the grubs will dig the earth quite well and be able to descend; but, at the start, that would be very dangerous for them. Knowing these difficulties, the mothers, however greatly tempted by the smell, abstain from breeding. As a matter of fact, after long waiting, fearing lest some packets of eggs may have escaped my attention, I inspect the contents of the jar from top

to bottom. Meat and sand contain neither larvæ nor pupæ: the whole is absolutely deserted.

The layer of sand being only a finger's-breadth thick, this experiment requires certain precautions. The meat may expand a little, in going bad, and protrude in one or two places. However small the fleshy eyots that show above the surface, the Flies come to them and breed. Sometimes also the juices oozing from the putrid meat soak a small extent of the sandy floor. That is enough for the worm's first establishment. These causes of failure are avoided with a layer of sand about an inch thick. Then the Bluebottle, the Flesh-fly and other Flies whose grubs batten on dead bodies are kept at a proper distance.

In the hope of awakening us to a due sense of our insignificance, pulpit orators sometimes make an unfair use of the grave and its worms. Let us put no faith in their dreary rhetoric. The chemistry of man's final dissolution is eloquent enough of our emptiness: there is no need to add imaginary horrors. The worm of the sepulchre is an invention of cantankerous minds, incapable of seeing things as they are. Covered by but a few inches of earth, the dead can sleep their quiet sleep: no Fly will ever come to take advantage of them.

At the surface of the soil, exposed to the air, the hideous invasion is possible; ay, it is the invariable rule. For the melting down and remoulding of matter, man is no better, corpse for corpse, than the lowest of the brutes. Then the Fly exercises her rights and deals with us as she does with any ordinary animal refuse. Nature treats us with magnificent indifference in her great regenerating-factory: placed in her crucibles, animals and men, beggars and kings are one and all alike. There you have true equality, the only equality in this world of ours: equality in the presence of the maggot.

Wild Wings

By W. H. Hudson

WELLS-NEXT-THE-SEA is one of the spots I love best to frequent in the autumn, chiefly to see and hear the wild geese that winter there in larger numbers than at any other point on the coast. This season of 1912 I had another object in going thither; there remained two or three weeks' work to be done in order to complete a book on bird life; and where, flying from London, could one find a place more admirably suited for such a purpose? A small, ancient, village-like town, set in a low flat land next the sea, or separated from the sea by a mile-wide marsh, grey in summer, but now rust-brown in its autumnal colour. The fisher-folk are poor, and their harvest consists mainly of shellfish, mussels, whelks, clams, and they also dig at low water for sand-worms to be sold for bait. They are like their feathered fellow-creatures, the hooded crows; and indeed they resemble crows when seen, small and black, scattered far out on the wide waste of sand. When the men are away at the sea and those noisy little animals, the children, are shut up in school, you can imagine that there is no longer any life in Wells; you would not be in a quieter place on the wide brown marsh itself, nor on the low grassy sand-hills faintly seen in the distance, nor on the wide stretch of sand beyond, where the men, crow-like, are seeking their subsistence.

To Wells I accordingly went on October 17, yet was no sooner in this ideal spot than I began to think it was the last place where I could do any work, since even the noises and distractions of London would have a less disturbing effect than that low murmur, that familiar yet ever strange sound of the old old sea, that came to me by day and night, and the wild cries and calls of passing birds, especially the cries of the geese.

It is related of a man who had a great reputation in his day which is now ended, that he was once taken to task by a friend for having settled himself at Wells. You, his friend said, with your love of mankind, your noble ideals, your many talents, and especially your eloquence in addressing your fellow men—how can you endure to waste your years in this dead-alive little town in a marsh?

The other answered that it was because Wells was the only town in England where, sitting at ease in his study, he could listen to the cries of wild geese.

To me, just a naturalist, these same cries were even more than to that famous man: to sit still and do any work where I heard them was the difficulty. Thus was I pulled two ways, and my state was that of being in, or between, "two minds." My wish was that these same two minds could have two bodies with sets of senses complete, so that each might be able to follow its own line. I envied the chameleon just then—a strange creature which is said to change its colour according to its surroundings. That, however, is merely a physical condition, one which it shares with certain other creatures without any mind at all, or in which the mind is dormant, as, for example, in some crysalids. It is a minor mystery; the big mystery of the chameleon, the pretty problem for the students of animal psychology, is the divisibility of its mind, the faculty of being two persons in one body, each thinking and acting independently of the other. Observe him in a domestic state, sitting on a branch in a room, in appearance a deformed lizard, or the skeleton of one, encased in a discoloured, granulated skin, long dried to a parchment. The most remarkable feature is the head, which reminds one of a grotesque mediæval carving in or on some old church, of a toad-like or fish-like human creature with countenance expressive of some ancient, forgotten kind of wisdom. He is absolutely motionless, dead or asleep one might imagine; but on a closer scrutiny you discover that he is not only awake and alive, but that he has two lives in him—in other words, that the two hemispheres of his brain are working separately, each occupied with its own problem. It may be seen in his eyes—minute round lenses mounted on swivels, or small fleshy or rubber processes, capable of being elevated or depressed and pointed in

this or that direction at will. They are like the freely moving ears of a horse, but they do not point one way, since each one, together with the half-brain which governs it, is occupied with looking at a different thing. You see, for instance, that one of the pair is now aimed like a spy-glass at some remote object, also that it is continually moving, and you will presently discover that it is following the erratic movements of a bluebottle, wandering about the room. This is not an idle amusement nor mere mental curiosity on the chameleon's part; he knows that the fly is an indefatigable traveller and investigator; that by-and-by, when he has finished quartering the ceiling, running up and down the walls and looking at the pictures, he will turn his attention to the furniture, piece by piece, and eventually arrive at that very spot, that stand or table with its counterfeit presentment of a branch, and upon the branch the strange image of a monster, perhaps a god, of stone or metal, dug up by some Flinders Petrie in some desert city, where it has been lying buried in sand these several thousand years. Truly a curious and interesting object for an inquisitive fly to look at! And just as a little tourist will place himself in front of the Sphinx to survey its countenance at a proper distance of forty or fifty yards, so does the fly settle himself before the face of the chameleon, at a distance of six or eight or ten inches. That is not too far for the tongue, which is as long as the body: the eye on a swivel has never lost sight of the blue wanderer; it is fixed on him even now; the tongue follows like lightning, and lo, the fly has vanished!

Meanwhile, the same chameleon, on the other side of him, has fallen into a doze, or reverie, or is perchance philosophising, the eye on that side being sunk into the skull. One could say that he is lying comfortably muffled up at home, lapped in rosy dreams, while his fellow chameleon is abroad hunting, practising all his subtle strategy to capture a shy, volatile quarry. Yet at any moment these two, so divided in mind and indifferent to each other's doings and thinkings, can merge into one: they literally pull themselves together, and a single will takes command of the entire body, from the gargoyle head to the prehensile tail.

I can laugh now at the plight I was in just through not

being made like a chameleon; but it wasn't a laughing matter when Conscience pointed sternly to the writing-table and at the same time a persuasive voice called to me from the door to come out, otherwise I should miss something never again to be seen. No hint as to what the wonderful thing was to be, nor when nor where it was to be seen: all I had to do was to be out all day, waiting and watching!

The wonder is that when, in spite of Conscience, I got away, I did witness some things which were actually worth recording. Thus, one day while sitting by the old sea-ruined coastguard station on the dunes, between the sea and the marsh, I noticed a small, unfamiliar bird, robin-like in appearance, but darker and without the red waistcoat, flitting in a sprightly manner about the old crumbling walls. By-and-by his flittings and little dashes after passing flies brought him to a perch within five yards of me; and sitting there, curiously eyeing me, dropping his wings and flirting a broad tail, he stood revealed—a black redstart! A happy experience: in all that empty, desolate place I could not have met with a more engaging stranger, nor one more friendly. For he is first cousin to our pretty firetail with a sweet little summer song, only our redstart is a shy bird, whereas this black redstart was tamer than any robin. I took it that he was resting a day on the dunes after his perilous flight over the North Sea, and that he came from Holland, where he is common and breeds fearlessly in and on the houses. That is why he was so confident, also why he eyed me so curiously, for he knew by the look of me that I was not a Dutchman. More than that he did not know, and he had no letter tied to his wing; nevertheless, he had a greeting and a message for me from that country and that people, who, among the nations of the Continent, are most like the English in kindness to animals as well as in some other things, but are better than we are in their treatment of birds.

On another day I stole into the pine-wood growing on the sandhills by the sea, and in the heart of the wood came to a deep, basin-like depression in the sand, and there I seated myself on the rim or margin among the long, grey marram grass, with the dark red pillars of the pines standing all about me. It was marvellously still in that hidden

place in the wood; after sitting there for half-an-hour, listening and watching, the thought came to me that I might stay there half a day without seeing any living creature or hearing any faintest sound of life. Yet before another minute had passed something living flashed into sight, the woodland creature that is most alive—a beautiful red squirrel with an exceptionally big bushy tail. He slided swiftly down a bole, and straightway began leaping, pirouetting, and dashing hither and thither about the floor of the basin, not twenty yards from my feet. As I sat motionless he did not see or did not heed me: he was alone in the wood, and was like the solitary nightingale that asks for no witness to his song, and played his glad, mad game with his whole soul. Now with feet together he arched his body like a stoat, then flung himself out full length and dashed round in a circle, and as he moved there was an undulating motion, as of wave following wave along his back and tail which gave him a serpentine appearance. On coming to a thick bed of pine needles, he all at once became motionless and spread himself out on the ground and looked like the flattened skin of a squirrel, with the four paws visible at the corners. When he had sufficiently enjoyed the sensation of pressing on the pine needles with the under surface of his body, he started up to continue his game, until he suddenly caught sight of a large, yellowish-white agaric growing some yards away, and, dashing at it, he tore it violently from the stalk with his two paws and began devouring it as if mad with hunger, taking huge bites and working his jaws like a chaff-cutter.

Sitting upright devouring his mushroom, he looked like a quaint little red man eating a round piece of bread-and-butter twice as broad as himself. Then suddenly, after a few more bites, he dashed the mushroom to the ground as if he hated the taste of it, and scampering off out of the hollow, vanished from sight among the trees.

With such things as these to be seen, the very thought of work gave me a sensation of weariness and disgust: to sit down to a pile of old note-books, some of them more than a year old, patiently and laboriously to sift out two or three observations worth recording out of every hundred, seemed an intolerable burden, and not worth the candle. Even the sight of a black redstart (with greetings from

Holland) and the romps of a fantastic squirrel seemed more to me a hundred times than the sights of a year ago. To go back to such stuff was to leave living, breathing, palpitating nature to finger bundles of old, faded photographs and muse on dusty memories. Why then go back? Why indeed! Ah! how easy to ask that question; how often we ask it, and there is no answer but the old one: because of the eternal desire in us, which must have fretted even the hearts of the men who dwelt in caves; to reveal, to testify, to point out the path to a new enchanted realm, which we have discovered; to convey to others some faint sense or suggestion of the wonder and delight which may be found in nature.

We say, and I am here speaking of my own peculiar people, the naturalists, that birds too, like ourselves, may be pulled two ways, and that two conflicting impulses may be the cause of one of the most pathetic of Nature's innumerable little annual tragedies. This is when a pair of swallows are rearing a late brood, and before the time comes for the young to fly are themselves overtaken and borne away to the south by the irresistible migratory instinct.

It happened that on the very day of my arrival at Wells, October 17, I noticed a pair of martins still feeding their young in a nest under the eaves above a sweetstuff shop, within two or three doors of the Wells post-office. Now I shall see for myself, I said, resolving to keep an eye on them. There were no other martins or swallows of any kind in Wells at that date: a fortnight earlier I had witnessed the end of the swallow migration, as I thought, on the South Devon sea-coast. I saw them morning after morning in numbers, travelling along the coast towards the Isle of Wight, which is one of their great crossing-places, until they had all gone.

I kept an eye on the martins, visiting them very early every morning and two or three times later during each day. The young, it could be seen when they thrust their heads and almost half their bodies out to receive the food their parents brought, were fully grown and very clamorous.

"They will be out in a day or two," I said confidently. The people of the house informed me that this same nest had been occupied, off and on, throughout the summer; and if we take it that eggs were laid at the beginning of

May, it must be assumed that this pair of martins had been occupied almost continuously with the breeding business for six months, and were now rearing their third, or possibly their fourth, brood. A long period when we consider that they could not have had a worse season: bad everywhere in England, it was exceptionally so on the Norfolk coast, where the winds and cold were most felt and the flooding rains in August were greatest.

As the young birds did not come out during the two following days, I began to look for their abandonment, whereupon the women of the house compassionately offered to take them in and feed them, in the hope of keeping them alive until the return of warm weather, when they would be liberated. From that time onwards they and others in the town who had begun to take an interest in the birds helped me to keep a watch on the nest. Assuredly the young would be abandoned and that very shortly; the weather was rough and cold, food becoming scarcer each day; and for a month or six weeks the impulse to fly south, the "mighty breath, which in a powerful language, felt not heard, instructs the fowls of heaven," must have been worrying the brains of those two overworked little martins.

But again the expected did not happen; the parents did not forsake their young, and on two occasions, one on October 25, the other five days later, they tried their best to get the young out. They came to the nest with flies a dozen times a minute, and instead of delivering the food into the open mouths they would flutter a moment with beaks just out of reach, then drop off to circle round and repeat the action. All these enticing arts were of no avail; the young had not the strength or spirit to launch themselves on the air, otherwise they would have been saved.

On the following day, October 31, the weather was exceptionally bad; it was cold, with a strong wind, and rained heavily all day: the call of the young now sounded feebler from the nest, and the eager little black, flat heads and white throats were no longer thrust out. Yet the old birds still laboured faithfully to find them food, only on this last day they did not go far in search of provender. They were too anxious, or in some way conscious, of the failing strength of the young; they hawked after scarce flies up and down the street, always near the nest, constantly

giving themselves that quick little shake by means of which the swallow throws the rain off his feathers. There was another noticeable change in them: at intervals of about a quarter of an hour one or both of the birds would fly into the nest and remain there for a space of three or four minutes, doubtless to warm the young. At all events, I don't think it was merely to rest themselves, as on previous days I noticed that when they wanted to rest they would fly into one of the empty martins' nests close to their own.

That last day came to an early end, as it began to get dark at four o'cock, and the old birds settled down with their young for the night.

The following morning, although somewhat chilly, was more like April than November, with a light wind, a crystal clear sky, and a sunshine with a magic in it to enliven the world and give renewed life even to the perishing. The old birds had vanished and no faintest sound came from the nest. I waited some hours, then procured a ladder and took the nest down, and found two full-grown dead young martins in it. One had died that morning, probably at two or three o'clock, before the turning of the tide of life; the other looked as if it had died about two days before.

This is but one case, yet it does suggest the idea that we may be mistaken after all in assuming that the migratory impulse or passion will cause the swallow to forsake a late brood, leaving them to die of starvation. Probably such cases do occur from time to time and have been observed, yet they may be exceptional cases. We know that a few swallows do linger on with us into the depth of winter each year; that they become torpid with cold, and that occasionally one does survive until the following spring. Such cases gave rise to the belief that swallows hibernate regularly, which was held by serious naturalists down to the early nineteenth century: but we know now that these cases of torpid birds are rare exceptions to the rule that the swallow migrates each autumn to Africa.

This one case of a pair of swallows with an exceptionally late brood, which I have had an opportunity of observing properly, inclines me to think that so long as the young continue alive and able to emit their hunger cry, the parental instinct in the old birds remains dominant and holds the migratory impulse in check or in abeyance; that only when

the insistent cry ceases and the young birds grow cold the release comes and the "mighty breath" blows upon and bears them away southward irresisting as a ball of thistledown carried by the air.

My anxious interest in the swallows did not keep me from seeing and hearing the geese. They had arrived, as usual, "in their thousands": the wild-fowlers said they had never seen them in greater numbers than this autumn. One reason for this was supposed to be the unusual abundance of food on the farmlands, where a great deal of the corn had remained on the ground on account of the floods in August and September. The farmers' loss was pure gain to the wild geese. The birds shot during my stay were fat and their crops full of corn; certainly they appeared happy; and when they passed over the town with resounding cackle and scream one could imagine they were laughing in the sky: Ha! ha! ha! it is a jolly life in spite of you wingless, wicked ones, so long as we remember when flying to and from the sea to keep out of range of your hateful old guns! They didn't always remember, and a goose was a great prize when one fell to the gun of one of these very poor men; but when they sent me round a bird just to see what a fine bird old So-and-so had got, and—"would I give him half-a-crown for it?" I could only reply that it was indeed a fine bird, and I congratulated my old friend on his luck, but I wasn't buying a goose. I can eat sheep and pig and some other beasts, always excepting cow; also fowl, pheasant, and various other birds, wild and tame; but I draw the line at wild geese. I would as soon eat a lark, or a quail, or a nice, plump young individual of my own species as this wise and noble bird.

The cries of the geese going inland to their happy feeding-grounds would come to me in my room before I was up in the morning, and again the same exhilarating sound was heard in the evening just after sunset, causing the women and children to run out of their cottages to see and listen to the passing birds. At that hour I was usually a mile or so out on the marsh or by the sea to have a good view of the geese as they came over. On some evenings they disappointed me, but there were always other birds to look at and enjoy, the chief among these being the hooded crow. He was a few days later than usual this year, but

during the last ten or twelve days of October came in steadily, arriving, as a rule, in the morning, until he was as numerous as ever all along the coast. The best time to see these birds is in the evening, when they have been feeding all day on the marshes, and are as full of small crabs and carrion cast up by the sea as the geese are of corn, and when they have an hour before going to roost to spend in play.

One evening I was greatly entertained by their performance, when the tide was out, leaving a wide stretch of mud at the mouth of the river or small estuary which serves Wells as harbour; and here some sixty or seventy birds had gathered to amuse themselves before going to roost. Here would be a bird looking for something to eat, and when he found a small crab or other morsel he would make a great to-do about it, and hold it up as a challenge to others; then his next neighbour would set upon him and there would be a sham-fight, and the crab would be captured and carried triumphantly away, only to be used as a challenge to others. This was but one of a dozen different forms of play they were indulging in, and while this play on the ground went on, at intervals of a few seconds a bird would shoot straight up into the air to a height of eighteen or twenty feet, then, turning over, tumble straight down to the ground again. To drop vertically down seemed to be the aim of every bird, but with a wind blowing they found it a somewhat difficult feat, and would wriggle and flutter and twist their wings about in various ways to save themselves from being blown to one side. At longer intervals a bird would shoot up to a height of forty to sixty feet, going up in a much easier way than the others, with a stronger flight and falling more skilfully, almost like a stone. So great was the difference between this display and that of the generality that these birds were like old practised hands or professionals at the game, and the others mere amateurs or beginners.

On describing what I had witnessed to an old fisherman and fowler, he said, "I've watched them playing like that many and many a time, and have thought to myself, they're just like a lot o' children."

My best evening was on October 29, for at the close of that day the sky cleared and the geese returned not in

detachments, but all together and a little earlier than usual. I was out on the marsh towards Blakeney, a mile and a half or so from Wells, when, about half-an-hour before sunset, a solitary goose came flying by me towards the sea, keeping only a foot or two above the ground. It was a wounded bird, shot somewhere on its feeding ground, and, being unable to keep with the flock, was travelling slowly and painfully to the roosting place on the sands. When it had got about a couple of hundred yards past me a few redshanks rose from the edge of the creek and, after wheeling round once or twice, dropped down again in the same place, and no sooner had they alighted than the goose turned aside from his course and, flying straight to them, pitched on the ground at their side. That is just how a bird of social disposition will always act when forsaken by his fellows and in distress: it will try to get with others, however unlike its own species they may be—even a goose with redshanks; and this, too, in a most dangerous place for a goose to delay in, where gunners are accustomed to hide in the creeks. It was evident that he was ill at ease and troubled at my presence, as after alighting he continued standing erect with head towards me. There he remained with the redshanks for full fifteen minutes, but he had not been more than two minutes on the spot before a passing hooded crow dropped down close to and began walking round him. The crow will not attack a wounded goose, even when badly wounded, but he knows when a bird is in trouble and he must satisfy his inquisitive nature by looking closely at him to find out how bad he really is. The goose, too, knows exactly what the crow's life and mind is, and no doubt despises him. I watched them intently, and every time the crow came within a couple of feet of him the goose bent down and shot out his snake-like head and neck at him. If my binocular had been able to catch the sound as well as the sight, it would have conveyed to me, too, the angry snake-like hiss which accompanied the threatening gesture. And each time this gesture was made the crow hopped away a little space, only to begin walking and hopping round the goose again until he had satisfied his impudent curiosity, whereupon he flew off towards his roosting-place.

Then, after a few minutes. from a great way off in the

sky came the sounds of approaching geese, and the wounded bird turned his breast towards the land and stood with head held high to listen to and see his fellows on their way to the roosting-place. The sound grew louder, and presently the birds appeared, not in a compact body, but in three single lines or skeins of immense length, while between these widely separated lines were many groups or gaggles of a dozen to forty or fifty birds arranged in phalanx form.

I had been witnessing this evening return of the geese for a fortnight, but never, as now, united in one vast flock, numbering at the least four thousand birds, the skeins extending over the sky for a length of about a third of a mile. Nor had the conditions ever been so favourable; the evenings had been clouded and it was often growing dark when they appeared. On this occasion the heavens were without a cloud or stain and the sun still above the horizon. I could see it from the flat marsh like a great crimson globe hanging just above the low, black roofs of Wells, with the square church tower in the middle. The whole vast aerial army streamed by directly over me and over their wounded fellow below, still standing statuesque and conspicuous on the brown, level marsh. In two or three minutes more the leading birds were directly above the roosting-place on the flat sands, and at this point they paused and remained stationary in mid-air, or slowly circled round, still keeping at the same height; and as others and still others joined them, the whole formation was gradually broken up, skeins and phalanxes becoming merged in one vast cloud of geese, circling round like a cloud of gulls. Then the descent began, a few at a time detaching themselves from the throng and sweeping obliquely downwards, while others, singly or in small parties, with half-closed wings appeared to hurl themselves towards earth with extraordinary violence. This marvellous wild wing display continued for four or five minutes before the entire multitude had come to the ground. Altogether it had been the most magnificent spectacle in wild bird life I had ever witnessed in England.

It was not until all were down and invisible, and the tumult of the multitudinous cries had sunk to silence, that the wounded bird, after some moments of indecision, first

taking a few steps onwards, then returning to the side of the redshanks, as if reluctant to part from those little unhelpful friends lest he should find no others, finally set off walking towards the sea.

There were no gunners out on the shore at this point just then, and he would be able to reach the flock in a little while, although he would not perhaps be able to follow them to the farmlands on the morrow or ever again.

The Hill

By R. Ellis Roberts

It was one of those hard, precise evenings when, before sunset, everything seems to become flat: the fields that lay just in front of me were cut out of cardboard, the long road down to Broad Oak appeared to stretch, not to the country, but to a backcloth; and the trees that overarched the lane to Symonsbury were untouched by any breeze that might give them the illusion of reality. For, when the country takes the decorative note, it is reality which is the illusion: one almost imperceptibly flattens oneself along the hedgerows in order to avoid breaking the perfect truth of the theatre which Nature contrives so much more skilfully than man.

I was tired and walked a little listlessly. I had business to do in Bridport; but I knew I should be in long before seven, and I enjoyed sauntering down the road, while the decadent sun of early April made green tinsel out of the budding larches, and soft little puddles of brown glow from the ruts and hoof-marks in the sandy soil. I was feeling well in a genially tired way, and quite ready for the walk home again; feeling, however, singularly un-sharp. I mean that my senses, after the exertions of the week, were rather sleep-haunted—I had caught Nature's lesson, and felt all this activity of limb and thought to be the substance of nothing but a rather beautiful dream. My mind was as casual as my walk, and was occupied, so far as I remember, with nothing more arresting than some vaguely pleasant remembrance of a youthful affection.

I dwell on all this because I want to insist that I was not in an observant mood, not at all in the state to make the adventure I had likely. Those to whom I have told this story have all insisted that my "imagination" or "fancy" has made more of the facts than they warrant; that I was deceived by shadows, or misled by reflections;

that my eyes were tired and played me tricks, that my memory is false and ill-suited to exact accuracy. So I would insist that such imagination as I have was almost quiescent, that my mind was singularly unalert, and that nothing can explain the extreme vividness of my recollection of that night of April 3rd, except the truth of what I saw. Its very incongruity, not only with my mental condition, but with the actual character of the evening, with the verdant artificiality of that Dorset springtime, when the countryside is rather less actual than the contours on an ordnance map, is a witness to the reality of that experience.

I had indeed forgotten the Hill. I generally used to look out for the first sight of it, when the road begins to run under the shoulder of the wooded height, and to skirt the Hill of Sacrifice. I don't know who gave it that name: whether, indeed, it is more than a modern device of some local journalist; but it suits the Hill. Everyone who passes along the main road from Chideock to Bridport must see it; but its most characteristic aspect is only caught from the road betwen North Chideock and Symondsbury. It is a curious, conical hill, covered with green grass and generally delivered over to innumerable sheep. It reminds one instantly of those high places on which the ancient Hebrews honoured other gods than Jehovah, the places where Solomon built temples for the family godlings of his heathen queens. Everyone felt this about the Hill, so it does not show any preoccupation of mine that I, too, always connected it with sacrifice, and the stone, square altars of the old faiths. I had never been up the Hill. I never met anyone who had. It was out of the way, and would be, though an easy, an unnecessary little climb for one whom Fleet Street had left without the wind of his youth. The sheep who grazed there belonged to a farm at the bottom, and found their own way up and down.

Well, as I said, on that night I had forgotten the Hill. And I thought at first that it was the obtrusion of a forgotten object on my sight that gave the shock to my nerves which the first glimpse of the Hill caused. I think when one, so to speak, re-sees a perfectly familiar object, it has a more active and energising effect on the nerves than contact with something entirely new. Certainly the Hill made me jump. I stood and stared at it. As I stared I realised that the

shock I had received was not entirely due to the Hill's re-assertion of its presence to my forgetful mind.

The Hill was different.

I glanced hastily back along the road, and over to my left where the fields stretched idly away; they were the same as they had been a minute ago, comfortable, artificial, flat, with no more atmosphere than a landscape in a modern painting. Then I swerved back to the Hill. It was ominous, alive, clamant with some mystery that I had not guessed. I should explain that though it was the Hill of Sacrifice, no one had associated it with anything mysterious or mystical. It was obviously the servant of some settled, rather courtly, religion, where the priests of the second-century Roman, journeying from Dorchester, had made polite augury at dawn. This evening, all that was changed. The Hill threatened. It quarrelled vehemently with the rest of the landscape. It stood like something or somebody naked and hairy in the middle of a crowd of modish and courtly figures; it was like some primitive, pre-Gothic idol in a French classical temple; or as if you sundered a picture of Watteau's with one of those glowing yellow Tahitians of Gauguin's.

I stood and stared at the Hill. And as I stared I became aware of two things. First, there were no sheep on the Hill. Their absence aided the strange, nude look of the thing. And I began to think that perhaps, after all, the change in the Hill was my fancy. Then, as I looked, the Hill lurched: that, of course, is an exaggeration; but it was the effect made on me by the movement of something that was almost up on the round crown at the top. With that movement the power of the Hill became active: suddenly and as by antagonism, I too leapt into mental alertness. The Hill and I were there, enemies, but akin in this, that we were the players in the set scene; still the green fields spread away to the back-cloth; still the road ran as the road runs to the wings; still the sun, though now faintlier, flickered on green and brown, and turned them to paper and canvas—but now there were two lives on the stage, and the play was begun.

Before starting for the Hill—it is noteworthy that no other course but that of immediate access to my antagonist ever seemed possible—I looked at it once more,

for I knew when I had scrambled through the hedge and across the first field, I should lose sight, for a while, of the top: I looked at the spot where the Hill had shuddered, and I saw that it was a figure, apparently human, and heavily burdened, which was now on the top and against the blue-black horizon which the sun was even still burning into angry gold. At the distance I was—I have always suffered from short-sightedness—I could not make out clearly whether it was man or woman, or what it was that the figure carried; nor indeed did I greatly care, but I got through the hedge and started as quickly as I could for the summit of the Hill.

In the second field it was darker; and I felt that the atmosphere was a trifle oppressive; and there was a heavy, hot smell in the air, like musk. Of course, by now my imagination was at work; but I was not consciously inventing any explanation of what I saw or felt. I was simply bringing to bear on facts that were obtrusive, all I had of perception and sensitiveness. I had not even then definitely decided whether what was abroad was evil or not. I knew it was an enemy—but it was inimical, at present, only in the sense of demanding effort and conflict. I could not proclaim that it was evil. As I climbed towards the lower slopes of the Hill, still hidden from view by a thick hedge, I was not conscious of any definite aim. I knew where I had to go; but I had no idea of what I should find, or what I should do. Just before I reached the final hedge something happened which removed all doubt as to the nature of that which I had to fight. Abruptly, and beginning on one long piercing note, a strange music clove the surrounding silence. After the first shrill rending of the evening's solitary quiet, the music went on with a wicked and luxuriant abandon that recalled to me all that I knew of the vague power of harmony for evil. It was not vulgarly lascivious or alluring; it had in it that higher note of defiance, that keener note of pride and power and of certain, though dishonourable, rule which marks the realm of the devil from that of the world and the flesh. It had in it that perverse ascetic note, that strain of rapture and endeavour and adventure which the sons of Satan achieve no less than the sons of Christ. It gave out no single note of compromise or concession: it was music of the airless heights,

of the wilderness, of the great wastes of sand, or the interminable vastness of evil waters where the greater devils meditate and scheme.

When I heard it, all doubt dropped from me. Then dropped, too, everything of the present. I knew the music: I knew, somehow, the player; and I knew his instrument. And as I went on up the Hill I knew what task lay before me, and with Whom I was to wrestle. I felt no fear and no confidence. No fear as to the terror or extent of the conflict, and no confidence as to the result. The whole incident, though still to come, seemed a part of my life, not something that I could do, or could not do, so much as something without which I would not be I.

When I was through the hedge the sun was set, but it was still quite light, and I hoped it would not be dark for almost another hour. I looked up to the top of the Hill, and there was the figure I had seen, kneeling and piling stones on one another. He—for it was a young lad—was half turned towards me; but he was stooping over his work, and evidently had no idea of my approach. The music, which was getting louder every moment, seemed to come from the top of the Hill; but I could see no signs of the player: nor, indeed, had I expected to.

I looked carefully to my stick, and wished it had been of some stouter wood than cherry, and then started rapidly up the Hill. As I went on the music altered in character: from defiance it passed to menace, and from menace to a curious thin anger that somehow seemed intended for other ears than mine. It was. The lad looked up, puzzled, and I saw him distinctly say something towards the sound of the music. Then he saw me, recognised me, I think, and started down the Hill. The music stopped.

I went on, and after about ten minutes the lad and I met. We were both a little out of breath, and stood for a moment at gaze. He was a singularly beautiful boy, with one of those faces in which it is so hard to discover the lines which will afterwards coarsen and harden. He was about seventeen, and I remember that I had seen him working on some job between Allington and Eype. At the moment his beauty was almost unearthly: it had no intellectual qualities, and little of character, but just that even bloom which marks young animals. There was in his eyes,

however, a look far from animal—a look of exultation, of absorption, and combined with it a hardness that showed me my task would not be easy. What he said was in curious contrast with his appearance, and in even odder discordance with what was in our hearts, and in the heart of the Hill, and in the heart of that old Musician who this night, at least, was claiming the worship of his ancient altar.

"You be trespassing, Mr. O'Brien."

"I suppose I am," I answered. "It's so jolly to be in a country where trespassing doesn't do any harm. It's why I love Dorset, and these great grazing fields."

He looked at me as the country folk do when they don't quite catch what you say, and yet don't want to confess to it.

"No one's allowed up here. I must ask you to go down again."

His tone was very polite; but his eyes were set, and I saw his fingers twitching, and noticed the tremor of his shirt above his scurrying heart.

"Nonsense," I said. "I'm going to the top. Good night to you," and I started to get past him, rather hurriedly and with little dignity, I am afraid.

With a sharp cry he stepped in front of me. Before he could say anything more, I spoke again, as sharply as I could—for I would have given anything just then to avoid the fight, and for the lad to go home—"What on earth are you doing, boy? You know perfectly well Mr. Goodere doesn't mind where I go on his land. Besides, you have no business here: you are not in his employ, and I don't know that he would allow you here. Get out of my way."

For the moment my tone of ordinary annoyance staggered him. He became—for a brief minute—an ordinary good-looking lad who, through clumsiness, had offended "one of the gentry," and made a fool of himself. I kept hold on myself and waited to see him stumble away, thwarted and abashed. If this was the fight, I had feared unnecessarily. He began to turn on his heel, muttering some apology, and I went on upwards, when suddenly the music began again, insistent, defiant, challenging. In a second he rushed round; and with hot, hurried words, clung to my arm, impeding my way—"I was not to go—he was meeting his girl—he wouldn't let me—he would break me if I did—he would——" lies, and appeals, and

foul threats followed each other as swift as sin; his face once more took on that strange look of unearthly beauty, of curious exultation, as he pled with me not to go up the Hill.

And the music played faster and faster.

After a struggle that lasted, I suppose, but for a few minutes, I broke away from him and ran towards the summit. All pretence was now thrown aside. The lad knew that I was aware of his purpose: knew that I knew Who his companion would be, and what that awful music meant, as it broke the young silence of the fields with a challenge older and more hideous than any vice of cities or civilisation.

I got to the top of the Hill, with the lad close on my heels: and when I was at the top I realised suddenly it was night. Not, I think, that the ordinary world was yet dark, but a mist, acrid and pungent, hung over the top of the Hill, and seemed settled on the rude altar the boy had built.

I could not see him, but I heard his breathing close on my right. I thought I would try one last chance to avoid the conflict—for now fear had entered my very marrow. "Come down," I said, trying to make my voice as self-possessed as possible and as ordinary, "Come down and I'll go too."

There was no answer but his quick young breathing; and then on a note of the music he began to sing. When he sang his English had little accent, and his voice was a beautiful treble, that of a boy whose voice is going to break later than usual. What he sang I cannot put down here. It soared up in unimaginable wickedness, clear and pure as crystal, full of thoughts and words that we believe to have forsaken our world. The music adapted itself to his song and grew subtly and insolently wicked. The psalm of Satan rose up, invitatory, clarion, ascending to heights of sin that I did not know had ever been expressed in human words. The air grew hotter, and the mist glowed with a strange blurred light. The keen, acrid smell grew more intense, and the music shrieked more and more riotously, as though preluding some monstrous apocalypse.

Then, with no warning, there was silence.

I could hear nothing, not even my own breathing; and I could see nothing but the blurred glow that was, I judged,

just over the altar. Then I heard a sound. It was a voice, but of an accent not human, and the words it spoke were not English. I remember how, even then, it struck me as odd that one should hear a voice in a Dorset field speaking in tones that belonged neither to the place nor to the age I lived in. It sounded very low, very sure, and very old; old not with any quavering, but with that dogmatic certainty of age-long experience that people of great age, or of a great tradition, so frequently possess. Yet any certainty I had caught in human voices seemed but a shadow beside the deep, awful solemnity of this utterance. The voice was magical, ecstatic, assured with an eternal assurance. I strained my ears to listen during the few seconds while the voice continued, but I could distinguish nothing except what I thought possibly was the syllable "Pai," and I wondered if the sentence was in Greek. My senses by now were singularly acute: I had passed through fear into that strong, wine-glowing condition when one watches everything securely, oneself being external even to the dangers that are threatening one's body or soul. In this state, and in the boldness engendered by it, I took one step towards the glow that still shone over the altar. Long before I could approach, however, I was smitten—or rather not so much smitten as involved in a thick, palpable, and hideous atmosphere. Never have I been so submerged by anything external. The sensation was partly like that caused by a quicksand, which will wrestle with one's leg or arm as though the sand were endowed with life, and when one pulls out the endangered limb, it is as if one sprung out of some being's lively jaws. So with an automatic movement of repulsion, I sprang back and was released. Then the light glowed more brightly and I saw my companion. He was standing stark naked, with his arms outstretched like an Orante on a Catacomb fresco. His lips were still moving, and his gaze fixed intently on the glow above the rude stones he had piled up. Every moment the glow increased; I was only just over three yards from the altar, but the glow gave no heat, neither was there any smoke. Then as the light grew, in the centre of it there appeared a figure, and yet not so much a figure as a face, nor so much a face as a presence. It had the same beauty, that intolerable and sinful beauty which the boy

had; or rather it seemed to *be* that beauty. It was, however, never still, but passed with incredible rapidity from the expression of one sensation to that of another; it had that most singular quality which can occasionally be seen on earthly faces, a complete lack of unity—there was no central and availing character in which the details might inhere, and it was this lack which gave the Presence its extraordinary sense of wrongness, of wickedness, of sin. It is a vulgar comparison, but the mode of its loveliness, the mode of its very expression, reminded me of nothing so much as a cinematograph, that dreadful invention in which the mimicry of Life treads breathlessly and continuously on the heels of Life itself, and yet never attains it. The same absolute lack of peace, of joy, of truth, shone at me from the glow on the Hill of Symondsbury.

As I was looking, feeling numbed and rather sick from my effort to penetrate that infernal envelope which surrounded the altar, the boy stooped down and picked up something which had escaped my notice. When he stood up again I saw it was a spaniel which from the droop of its head was either drugged or dead—I guessed the former. Round its neck was a cord, and at the end of the cord a knife, whose blade glanced in the strange glow, or now fell back into the shadow of the night. Carrying the spaniel the boy stepped forward. I waited anxiously. He, when he was within the circle of the light, not only appeared to feel no discomfort, but looked lighter, more at ease, supremely healthy. If it was not for the look on his face, and the careless way he carried the dog, one would have judged him walking towards some celestial, instead of an infernal, revelation. As he approached the altar the Presence over it retreated, or rather ascended, and hovered, ominous, giving a sort of benison to what was going to be done.

For the strangest thing about that strange evening was not, perhaps, the events so much as my unhesitating acceptance of them. As I said, I was in no expectant mood when I first saw that movement on the Hill; yet I never doubted that what I saw on the Hill was an altar, never even questioned myself as to what the boy's purpose was, nor Whom it was he was going to worship; nor did he, in spite of the assumed ordinariness of our conversation, ever

doubt that I was come to prevent his rites, if and how I could. Why this was I leave to others; I have only to record the facts.

As he stepped up to the altar, I felt once more that I must take some action, I knew not what. It seemed useless to approach any nearer to the circle of the sacrifice, and it was evident I could do nothing with the boy except by force; and he had on his side powers greater than I had on mine. . . . But, had he? Ashamed, I remembered my faith. Since this ghastly business had begun I had uttered no conscious prayer, taken no steps to set in motion that vast spiritual machinery which is on the side of beauty and holiness. I made quick, in my foolish flurry, to remedy my mistake. Hurriedly I scampered through an "Our Father" and "Hail Mary," and, making the Sign of the Cross, walked towards the altar. Once more I was sucked in—though this time with greater force—and it needed considerable effort, as well as natural revulsion, to pull myself out of the circle, when I fell back on the clean, dark grass trembling with futile excitement.

As I stumbled out, the Presence laughed, and the boy echoed it. Anything more horrible in its perfection, more cruel in its note of absolute and casual conquest I never expect to hear. I felt not only beaten and baffled, but silly and childish; I felt as though some huge force had been not so much victorious, as possessive, over me—as if it was well known that I could offer no resistance, let alone any active interference. Maddened by the laughter, I dashed once more towards the altar, and again was first absorbed and then, by the strong reaction of my body, flung out of the ring, weak and helpless. As I was thus beaten for a third time, the music began again.

This time it had lost its note of gay sinfulness, and was more ceremonial and evocative; but it still kept its undertone of essential vice; the grey of its formal progress was still marked by passages of scarlet and phrases of deep black. With the beginning of the music the boy stopped, laid the dog on the altar, untied the knife, and swiftly cut some string that bound its legs together. As he did so, either because the effect of the drug had passed off or because he touched the poor animal with the knife, the dog gave a little moan. I cannot hope to convey the effect

on me of the dog's cry. Quite suddenly I felt that what I had to do was to save the dog. That possibly I should also have to wrestle with the boy, and to fight that Presence which still hung over the altar and glowed in the darkness of the night; but that everything else was incidental to saving the dog.

The boy had now begun a new hymn, and this time he, too, used a language which was not English. Once again I stepped forward, and as I moved the dog shrieked loudly, horribly. I rushed forward, and in a moment was involved in the atmosphere of terror and power. This time, however, instead of fighting against it, I tried to ignore it, and simply kept in mind the fact that I must save the dog. I caught the boy's arm just as the knife was about to come down behind the animal's shoulder, and with a quick jerk twisted his wrist, so that the knife flew out of his hand. With a snarl of fury he turned on me—still ignoring him, I caught at the dog and rushed towards the darkness. Then something caught me: the glow buzzed like a million bees, the face of the Thing became altogether blurred with the rapidity of its changes, and loomed once more imminent and horrible. Hands that were not hands plucked at the spaniel, feet that were not feet tried to trip mine; whatever I caught changed and swelled and shrunk and changed until I found myself again and again digging my fingers into my own palms, or clutching in foiled futility at the thick, obscene air. The smell was now rank and poisonous, and though there was no heat I felt the sweat running down my brow. The boy had fallen, apparently in a fit, but still clung tightly to my ankles; and as I pushed and heaved and struggled through the light I dragged his body with me. At first, as I say, the Thing which was there had seemed to attack me; but after a moment this stopped, and, instead of any active attack, I had to contend with what felt like a crushing, inchoate and slime-covered mass. I was near the end of my resources, and there was still more than a yard and a half of that atrocious glow to get through. As I fought on, the dog in my arms moved, gave a little bark and snapped furiously at the air. Strangely enough, the effort of the animal gave me extra strength. I burst out of the clutch that was holding me, and, the dog still barking excitedly, fell exhausted but

outside the light. As I fell, my head struck something cold and sharp, and I fainted away.

* * * * * *

I woke in the morning to find a small spaniel anxiously licking my hand.

I sat up, and saw some farm-hands approaching with a hurdle. I feebly waved my hand, and noticed that it was covered with blood. My head ached intolerably, and I put up my hand to it and found my hair was caked with dried blood. Then on the ground I saw a knife, with blood on the blade. The men came up. "Are you better, Mr. O'Brien?" "Yes, I'm all right," and I tried to struggle to my feet, but my head swam and I had to sit down again, rather ignominiously, on the ground.

"I shan't need that hurdle, I don't think—but thanks very much. How on earth did I——" then I recollected what my last conscious experience had been, and I could still smell that acrid stench.

"How did 'ee get here? Why, we don't know. Farmer Goodere's spaniel bitch brought us up here. She were in a terr'ble to do. Don't 'ee remember aught?"

I did: but nothing I could tell these men. I muttered something about having fallen against a stone; and they looked puzzled.

I got up again, and found I could stand.

Yes; there was the altar, or rather its ruins, for the stones had fallen. I began to walk along with the men, when I noticed some pebbles arranged rather curiously round the altar. I looked more closely at them—and spelled out in Greek letters the words ΠΑΝ, ΠΡΙΑΠΟΣ. ΑΠΟΛΛΩ; and then I knew under what titles the boy had come to sacrifice to Evil, and with Whom I had fought that night. I stooped and caressed the dog, who was frisking at my side in extravagant pleasure.

"'Ee must have a pup of hers, Mr. O'Brien—she won't be long now," said one of the men.

* * * * * *

That afternoon there was a caller—or rather two—at my cottage. My little maid came and told me that Mrs. Toogood would like to see me, and a woman entered whom

I knew well by sight. She was evidently in great distress. When she was a little calmer she told me how her boy—who had just begun work as a railway porter—had been rather odd lately, humming to himself, and looking, as she expressed it, "all overish." This morning she had gone to wake him, and found him looking dead white; no effort of hers could rouse him from a slumber that seemed deeper than natural. She made up her mind to send some excuse to the station, and ran round for the doctor. When he came the boy was awake. "He seemed, Mr. O'Brien, to be a child again. He just put his arms round me and kissed me—which he hasn't done for three weeks—but he can't speak."

"Can't speak," I echoed.

"Not a word," she sobbed. "The doctor says he's had a shock." Here she broke down again and wept.

I sat wondering. "I suppose, Mrs. Toogood, you don't know whether he was out last night?"

"Out? No, sir. I still go up and see him after he's in bed—and he was in at half after nine. He was very curious, though, and didn't say a word to me, though I knew he was awake."

"Ah! but earlier in the evening—about sunset?"

"No, sir. He was home to supper, though he didn't eat a bit and wouldn't speak a word. But it's this morning, sir. Though he's so kind and nice and happy, he has such odd ideas. He got a slate and wrote on it, 'I belong to Mr. O'Brien'——"

"What," I said—"I belong——!"

"Yes, sir; that's what I'm telling you. And the doctor said we mustn't excite him, though he doesn't get annoyed like he used; and so I've brought him up here. I thought you might help me, sir."

"Where is he?"

"Outside, sir." She rose eagerly. "May I have him in?"

"Yes," I answered.

In a minute she was back with her son. There was no doubt about it. It was the same boy. He was not less beautiful than I had thought; but this morning there was nothing sinister or evil about his beauty. He saw me and then, with a grace very rare in an English boy, knelt and

kissed my hand. I hastily drew it away, and asked him—

"What do you want?"

With a smile that was quite jolly and boylike, he darted into a corner, where there was a pair of old boots of mine, and went through the motions of polishing them. Then looked, first at me, then at his mother, with an air of plaintive request.

Well, after some discussion that lasted longer than it needed, the boy became my servant. He was perfectly sane, though more childlike than most country boys. He has never recovered his voice, but is so quick that one hardly realises his dumbness. I can give no explanation of how he was on the Hill of Sacrifice at the same time as he was at home eating his supper; but would suggest that there is more than modern incredulity will admit in those old stories of the Sabbath when demons assumed the places of men and women who were temporarily absent from their homes, entangled in the lures of the Devil.

Farmer Goodere had to give me, not a puppy, but Jessie herself: for she ran to my cottage that evening, and has lived with me ever since.

On the Theatre

By Gordon Craig

PERHAPS you will not mind letting me write you a few words about the Theatre. I should like to write as a Theatre man, in spite of the fact that an able writer, Mr. George Banks, wrote in the last number of the *Manchester Playgoer* that the future will not regard me as an artist of the theatre, clearing the way now, and to be passed later and forgotten, "but as a supreme artist with a vision of a great new art which links itself likewise to the Eternal." Now, although I should love to be connected with anything so promising as the Eternal, I want most of all to be linked with that which promises nothing—that is to say, with the Theatre.

In one or two short books that I have written I have always brought the word "Theatre" into the title. It is, in my mind, too early to talk of the *Drama*, and we must be content at present to confine ourselves to the Theatre. If the Art of the Theatre came out of the Art of the Drama, we should have had a fine theatre centuries ago, but I hold that the theatre always has to appear before the drama, and that Drama is a natural consequence of a fine theatre. I believe this is the truth, and it ought not to be spoiled. Centuries have attempted to prove something else, and centuries have failed. Let us then for the first time in history accept the obvious—and accept it without further delay. If it is not so obvious to you as it is to me, will you excuse me from going over much old ground and turn to the book called "On the Art of the Theatre," which was written as a footnote to explain the obvious? Although what Mr. Banks writes is always worthy of the most serious consideration, still I for one have no great love for what is called the New Art. When writing, Mr. Banks is thinking of this new art in the biggest sense of the word, that of a new form of art. I don't

believe in the New Art just because I do believe in the Old Arts. I believe that what we are taught is true, and that all things incessantly develop until they gradually change their appearance. The externals of all things therefore become often entirely new, the internal, and that is the eternal, remains the same—well, then.

In the old days it was held that spirit and matter were separate things. To-day it is held that spirit and matter are one and the same thing. In like manner Drama and Theatre are held to be one and the same thing. I try to keep the two apart, and for this reason I can only give an answer to a question concerning the Art of the Theatre and Drama to those who are willing to keep circling round these two, viewing the opposed sides: they will then be continually contradicting themselves, and by that process will approach the truth. For to look at a thing from one point of view and try to be truthful and logical, is to tell but one half of the truth, to speak only in favour of matter or only in favour of spirit. And in this question of spirit and matter and of Drama and Theatre, I must be rather on the side of that which is eternal than on the side of that which dies, but will not deny the primary value of matter. Perhaps you will now say that it is the change which is eternal, therefore it is the material which is eternal; perhaps so.

Now then, we come to the *direction* in which things move to change, and here each thing, each man, is alone with his desire. His desire is that which gives direction to eternal change, and should the whole world desire to move in the direction desired so fiercely by the old prophets and masters, we should regain once more that excitement which was once called ecstasy. All this is nothing new, it is very old: it has only that to commend it. Yet it is extraordinary that so aged a thing should be at the same time so youthful. I think there are many thousands who feel about this as I do, but these thousands as a rule are for some reason not chosen to be either artists or critics; nowadays, it seems that it is the man of *brains* who is chosen to be artist or critic, and of course brains are nice, useful things, and the world couldn't move on without them, but they are not the things which move, any more than any other organ moves, of itself; that which

moves is something which is outside while inside all organs, that extraordinary thing which they say is found everywhere, even in mud-banks; it is that which the scientist is telling us *we* can create, and of course to argue with a scientist would be impertinent and foolish; he knows so much, but he has bad eyes, he cannot see. Like the man dreaded by Blake, he sees *with*, not *through*, his eyes.* What then is this mysterious thing which is eternal, which creates itself, which keeps the world spinning, which never grows old or gets tired? No one has seen its face and lived. But there are some who have seen the reflection of its face. We call the reflection of this thing *Imagination*, and I think it is quite the most precious possession of mankind. Far more rapid than the inventions of modern science, far more powerful than anything in the world, it can pierce all that is material, no matter how dense; it leaps all divisions, no matter how wide. While it is the one thing needful to-day, it is the one thing disregarded; it is a thing all men possess in abundance and few men will develop. This has always been so. How many hundred years ago was it written: "Go unto this people and say, *Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.*" † It is all so obvious, it is so extraordinarily clear. This which heals, by which you see, by which you hear, by which you understand and are converted to the truth of life, and by which you live, is Imagination: you die the day you cease to have it, you live the hour that it comes to you. And then, too, it is so like another thing: it "is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, is not easily provoked, suffereth long and is kind." ‡ What does it matter what we call it, it is one and the same thing. And though one speak with the tongues

* "Man is led to believe a lie, when he sees with not through the eye."—William Blake.

† Acts xxviii., 26, 27.

‡ It is so like, that it may be said to be its very reflection—Love and Imagination. What are these two but the face of God and its reflection in the mirror?

of men and of angels and have it not, one is become as a sounding brass or tinkling cymbal. You see we are told this authoritatively, so we have to believe it. And if you work with materials (any materials, even with a carpenter's materials) it is extraordinary how true such a thing becomes to you. Now the carpenter plays an important part in the theatre; in fact, the stage carpenter is a man whom everybody relies on. What would you say were I to prove to you some day that the stage carpenter could be a great artist? I don't say that I want to prove that *and that alone*, but it is quite as likely and quite as easily proved as that the man who writes with a pen is a great artist. And I should say this humbler service can become just as spiritual and eternal as that of the man who wrote the poem which commences "To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow." What a revelation if this should some day be proved and that we should *understand!*

Then there is the man known as the theatrical electrician. Now suppose when I get my school I take away his electricity from him, and I give him gas-lamps to work with, oil-lamps, candles, and then finally limit him to the sun. What chance do you think will he have? Will he not have his first great chance? And yet he is only an artisan, a man who works with his hands. He is supposed to be concerned merely with externals, the externals of the "theatrical profession," and has no part in the Drama. But who is this arrogant being who dares to get up and assert that there is only one man who creates the drama, who can create it, and who ever has created it, and that one man is the writer? The man of brains. Should these mere artisans advance some day and awaken our understanding, our imagination, it will not be through the extent and quality of their brain power, their taste, but because of their living perception and knowledge of humble materials. It will not be because they are thinking of the eternal, or absorbed in the contemplation of beauty, but it will come about when they have learnt to see that their home, the theatre, the most despised institution all the world over, is endowed with just exactly as much of what we have always called God, as once the Mount of Calvary contained, the banks of the Nile, or the lonely paths of Siddârtha.

The Love Children

By Basil Macdonald Hastings

I.

LAZY waves were rolling the smaller pebbles up the beach of Petit Bot Bay. It was an intensely peaceful autumn evening, still and calm seemingly, even when the drowsy wind swayed the fronds of the thick bracken ferns. There is a relaxing caress always in the Guernsey air, particularly in the autumn evenings, that holds one out of doors late into the night.

Tom Denny and I stood on the cliff that slopes sheer into the water on the northern side of the bay. Denny was my oldest chum, knew everything, did not drink, was an engineer, at the time night-watchman at the water-works, the proud father of a "first-class petty officer, sir," in His Majesty's Navy, held the Royal Humane Society's medal for life-saving, couldn't bear to be reminded of it, was an Irishman whose vagrant life had deprived his accent almost entirely of brogue, a fisherman, and—to borrow his own phrase—"all Sir Garnet."

The island was bathed in the setting sun. The glass in the greenhouses glittered gold and crimson from a dense background of olive and russet foliage, and the quaintly coloured houses, as fantastic in their way as the villas of Japan, looked additionally picturesque in the soft light.

Tom surveyed the island critically, said nothing—expressively—and turned seaward. A yawl, tightly reefed, cut coquettishly through a great patch of gold at the mouth of the bay, and then, with shivering sail, tacked towards the "landing-place," a rather dangerous looking patch of rocks.

"Who's that, Tom?"

"Jerry—Jerry Le Maitre. He's been clearin' his pots,

I reckon. He's a half-witted cuss, and, bless you, what a liar! Now just you see when he comes up here, he'll say he's got nothing. You have a look through the glass and see what he puts in his safe-pot."

The fisherman had lowered his sail, and was bending over a pile of corks floating beside his boat. These he lifted in, and commenced hauling on the attached rope. The work seemed to tax his strength to the utmost, the rope at which he pulled being swollen to four or five times its natural size by limpets and seaweed. At length a huge crate appeared at the surface, the rope was fastened securely, and a lid in the roof of the crate opened. This big wicker-work construction was the "safe-pot" in which the fisherman housed his shellfish to keep them fresh till Saturday, market-day, came round. With great care and evident pride, twelve monster lobsters, crabs, and cray-fish were lifted from the bottom of the boat and dropped into the crate. So perfectly still was the air that one could hear the "plunk" as the heavy fish were dropped into the water.

"Beautifully quiet, isn't it, Tom?"

"Yes, sir. Reminds me of the days when we were running from Messina to the African coast. Aye, those were days. A beautiful trip—but sometimes not a breath o' real wind for days on end. Oil, we was fetching, water for oil. Yes, sounds queer, b'David it does, nowadays. We took fresh water from the Spaniards, and the niggers gave us oil for it. But it weren't so paying as it sounds. But it was a lovely trip, lovely, real soft time, pudding for dinner, Lord knows what. Yes, I used to call the Queen my aunt in those days."

There was a sound of light footsteps behind us, and both of us, instantly conscious of the approach of womanhood, turned our heads sharply. Only a few yards away from us on the path stood a young girl of perhaps sixteen or seventeen years of age. She was poorly dressed, but the drab and ragged clothing did not detract from her ripe young beauty. She had an extraordinary quantity of hair for a girl of her age. Her figure was almost fully developed.

"Go home, you little devil," snarled Tom. The girl's lips sulked and her big eyes blazed with resentment. But she had no courage. There was something craven in the

way she immediately turned and hurried back the way she had come.

I turned to Tom for some explanation of the sudden apparition. He did not meet my eyes. But he was acutely conscious of my curiosity, I could see, although I said nothing. For the first time I saw a suspicion of something like shame in his strong, ugly old face.

"She's grow'd since you was here last," presently he said.

"Grown! Who is she?"

"Don't you remember Lucy?"

"Bless my soul! that's not your girl, Lucy?"

"She's not my girl. She never was," he replied angrily. "I never told you then. It didn't seem to matter. She's a love child. Some Captain in the Army was her father, and the mother was a governess. My missus took the kid because they paid well and we wanted the money at the time. I curse the day we took her."

"Turned out badly, Tom? She was a very pretty little child, wasn't she?"

"Yes, pretty enough. Pretty enough now, I reckon. But the devil's in her. She's been a curse to us ever since we had her. The Sisters at the school could do nothing with her. She's a thief and a liar. I reckon all that sort are."

"We won't say that, Tom. . . What was she doing down here?"

"After this young fool, Jerry Le Maitre. He's just such another as her. Thieving liars, the pair of 'em. And he's half mad, they say, with it."

There was a crunching below us on the stony path. Jerry Le Maitre was clambering slowly up. When he came into view, I was pleased to see a slim, gracefully built young fellow of perhaps twenty. His features were delicate and sensitive. His eyes were wide and blue, his hair brown and curly. His eyes and mouth laughed up at us.

"Well, any luck, Jerry?"

"Ah, no, Mr. Denny, no luck. Fishin's very bad, very bad."

Tom turned his face to the sky, screwed it up and showed his fine white teeth in a disgusted grimace. The all-seeing sun blushed in the west.

II.

A few nights later I sat in my tiny sitting-room in Tom's cottage looking out from the flower-framed window on a rain-soaked view. It was a heavy, warm, quiet rain, and it whipped strong, cool scents out of the thick vegetation. It was nearly midnight and Tom had gone off to his all-night job at the water-works.

Presently a girl walked up the path with a cape over her head. I guessed that it was Lucy from the sensuous grace of her walk, but it was a little surprising that she should be so late. Mrs. Denny, her big son Jack, and their real daughter Alice, had all gone to bed long ago.

She knew how to force her way in, and when I heard her gentle step into the little passage outside my door I made up my mind to question her—both for her foster father's sake and her own.

She started when I opened the door, and eyed me sullenly.

"Come in, Lucy," I said. "You are very late, and you must be very wet. And I want to talk to you, if you are not too tired."

She did not answer then, but walked into my room. She drew the soaked cape from her head, revealing a face rosy with heat. Her eyes suspected me. There was the harassing inquiry of the unsure woman in her look.

"Dry your hands. They are dripping with rain." I handed her my bathing towel, and I noticed as she rubbed her hands that they were very small and shapely.

"Where have you been? . . . You may sit down if you like."

She sat down on the edge of a chair.

"Are you going to row me for being late?" she proceeded to inquire.

"Oh, no. It is none of my business. I know you are always getting into trouble. It seems such a pity. I should like to make you happier."

"Would you?" Still that embarrassing suspicion in her eyes. "They've given me up, I think." She jerked a shoulder towards the door.

"Do they know you are out?"

"I don't know and I don't care. I went to bed at ten and then I climbed through the window."

"In order to meet Jerry Le Maitre?"

"Yes. Why not?"

"Precisely. Why shouldn't you be friendly with Jerry?"

"You are saying that to draw me out."

"Not at all. You must have a friend, and you have chosen Jerry. They are not kind to you here."

She seemed restless under this.

"They're kind enough. It isn't them I blame. I suppose I'm wicked and they can't forgive that. But I'm different to them. I can't tell you how, but I am different."

"Do you ever wonder why you are different?"

Lucy raised surprised eyes to mine.

"Oh, you know, do you?"

"Know? What do you mean, Lucy?"

"You know that they aren't my people, that I'm a love-child."

"Well, yes, Lucy, I do know it. But surely they weren't cruel enough to tell you."

"Alice found it out somehow and told me because she hates me. And it did make me happy when I heard it. I'm proud I'm different. My mother was a lady, or very nearly a lady."

"Oh, you know who she was."

"She's dead now, but she used to come and see me years ago. They told me to call her auntie. I remembered that when Alice told me, and I set to work to find out who she was."

"And you succeeded?"

"Oh, yes, I know all about myself, thank you."

"Well, on the whole, I think it is as well. What are you going to do with your life?"

"What should I do? Stay here and get married. That's all I can do, isn't it?"

"I am not sure. I don't want to flatter you, Lucy, but you are very beautiful, and I think you should have a chance in England. You would marry much better in London."

"I know what you mean. And I can't stand these dull fools here. One of 'em is always worrying me to marry

him. How can I marry any of them when I despise them all?"

"Except Jerry, surely?"

"Jerry! Ah, well!" She looked at me a little curiously. "But, then, he's not a sweetheart."

"Just a chum, eh?"

She did not answer for a moment, but smiled as if enjoying some secret and pleasant knowledge.

"He's my only friend."

"But how can you mix with him? He's dull-witted, worse than the rest of them about here."

"Is he? He's only dull-witted in some ways. In others he knows more than anyone, more than you."

"You are fascinated by his good looks."

"No. But I'm proud of them. You see, he's my brother."

"Lucy, be careful. You mustn't invent brothers, however pleasant it seems."

"I'm not inventing. He is my brother. Only he and I know. I didn't want to tell you, but you provoked me somehow. You must promise not to tell anyone else."

"I won't tell, Lucy. But this is very strange news."

"It's true. When I set to find out about myself, I found out that also. We were friends before, and Jerry was just wild with delight when I told him. Everybody insulted him, you see, and I was the only one who was kind to him. He had no people, no relations, just as I had none. And then we discovered we were brother and sister."

"And your father?"

"Was his too."

"Lucy, are you sure of this?"

"Deadly sure. We had the same mother and father. Just the two of us. Three children were born to her and one died. I found her nurse and she put me in the way of finding it all out. Besides"—the girl's pretty voice swelled with pride—"look at us together. We're just alike. His eyes and mine. We could exchange them. And look how beautiful his hands are. They are nicer than mine."

I thought of the lad's appearance, and it indeed seemed that she was speaking the truth.

"Why do you keep this to yourself, Lucy? They are constantly blaming you for meeting Jerry. Why not tell them the real reason?"

"Well, I'm not supposed to know that I'm a love-child. Only Alice knows that I know. It would be very difficult to tell them all about it. And I think they would turn me out to go and keep house for him."

"Wouldn't you like that?"

"He's very poor. He couldn't feed us both. The people that brought him up are dead, and he lives all by himself. Besides, he's saving."

"So that he may——?"

"So that he can take me to England."

"I see. Then you want to go? You are ambitious."

"Ah, yes. But I won't go without Jerry. And Jerry may never have the money in time. So that I shall have to marry and be miserable."

"Ah, well, it mustn't come to that, Lucy," I laughed. "Now go to bed. I shall have a chat with Jerry to-morrow."

"You won't tell him that you know? It would hurt his feelings so much."

"I shall be very discreet, Lucy."

She smiled frankly at me, picked up her cape, and went quietly to her room.

III.

Jerry Le Maître looked up at me very shyly when I surprised him at breakfast the next morning. There appeared to be only one habitable room in his cottage. The weather had, perhaps, eaten the others away. In this room Jerry sat on his bed and fed off very thick bacon. There were no chairs.

"Want to go fishin', sir?"

"Not to-day, Jerry. Too cold and squally. I suppose you'll be going out?"

"No, sir."

"You're a lazy beggar, Jerry. You ought to work hard every day. Otherwise you'll never have enough for your old age—or for marrying."

"Do you want money for marrying, sir?"

"Of course you do."

"It's the conventional idea, of course. But I'm sure Nature does not approve of being defied in that way," said Jerry sententiously.

I am afraid that I opened my mouth so wide with astonishment that Jerry resented it and retreated carefully into his normal shell.

"I suppose you mean to get married, Jerry?"

"I don't reckon anything either way."

"You've thought it out, Jerry. I should like you to tell me your theory about it."

"Thank you, sir. I'm not sure of anything I think yet. I won't talk for you to laugh at me."

I tried hard, but in vain, and had to walk back to Tom Denny's cottage without any further expression of Jerry's views on social economy. I remembered what Tom had said about the lad being half-witted, and decided to say nothing to him of my interview. Tom would probably have regarded my report as overwhelming evidence of Jerry's insanity.

The day was an angry one, and I spent most of it indoors. I tried to find the interesting Lucy, but alas! She had obtained a day's work as a kitchen help at a big house on the road to St. Peter Port. I wondered if she would get through the day without trouble. Tom, who, having to work all night, slept for six hours in the daytime, expressed the opinion when he woke up that she would be nabbed by the police for stealing spoons. At all events, he viewed the prospect of her, to him, inevitable disgrace with utter indifference.

The night was as soft and warm as the day had been cold and cruel. Lucy came back with an unspotted character, as far as could be gathered, and went to bed as usual at ten. I guessed that she would be off to meet Jerry, *via* the bedroom window, and, tired of my own company and sick of lack of occupation, I determined to follow her.

Sitting close to my bedroom window, I soon heard the thud of her fall from what must have been quite a six-foot drop after she had suspended herself from the sill. I heard her patter away along the path to the cliff, snatched up a cap, and warily followed her. I could easily persuade the two that I had met them accidentally, and much of interest should result.

She made for the southern side of the bay, where the rocks shelved more, and made a path for herself that I had some difficulty in following. Once she stopped as if she heard me and looked back, but I was well in hiding.

We soon saw Jerry. Lucy waved her hand, and the boy waved back. I lay down in the undergrowth and let the girl go on to join him. Some minutes later I took a circuitous route to a ridge of rock backing the platform on which the boy sat. When I peeped cautiously over, the girl had already arrived. She sat beside her brother with an arm affectionately wound round his neck.

"How much money did you get, Lucy?" I heard Jerry ask.

"Two francs, and I had to give that up. But they gave me a penny back, and I stole this from an overcoat at the big house."

She pulled a coin out of her stocking and gave it to Jerry. I could not see what it was, but the boy was delighted.

"We're doing splendidly, Lucy. We've nearly enough now for the passage money. All we want is a little to live on till we get work."

"What sort of work shall I have to do, Jerry?"

"Well, you can't read and write much, can you? But you can speak French, although it isn't real French, you know, Lucy. You'll get something easily, and you won't mind if it's hard at first, because I shall soon be earning so much that you won't have to work at all."

"That will be heaven. And I shall only get out of bed when I want to. Are you going to swim?"

"Not to-night, Lucy."

"I'm going to put my feet in. I've been standing on them all day. Did anybody kick you to-day?"

"Yes. Old Mesurier. I won't work for him, and when he sees I'm not working for anybody else, he kicks me."

"When you get all the money in England, we'll come back and pay people to kill all these beasts, shan't we?"

Jerry laughed.

"We'll get even with them somehow, Lucy."

Lucy kissed him heartily and fell to removing her shoes and stockings. She then ran on to the sands and into the sea up to her knees. While she bathed her limbs, Jerry

pulled out a long, ugly shell shaped like a horn. He had bored little holes in it at regular distances and was able to blow quite musical notes on the quaint instrument. At the first soft soothing croon of the thing, Lucy looked up and clapped her hands in pleasure. Jerry's eyes twinkled and he played carefully and with relish as the girl swirled through the water.

Presently she left the shallows and came on to the sand. Jerry was playing a lazy, idle, gentle swaying air. Lucy stood for a moment on the smooth sand and swayed her body to the tune. Then she began to dance, as children dance. She bent this way and that, occasionally spinning herself like a top. And her arms were always moving with the music. It was as if Jerry were playing on her, as if she were his instrument, so perfectly were dancer and music in accord.

She danced as if she would never tire of it. There was never a pause, even when Jerry paused. The moon threw her black shadow on the brown sand and silvered her gleaming legs and feet. Her hair had fallen loose, and she might well have been a sea-nymph disporting herself on dry land. It was Jerry who tired first.

"I've no wind left, Lucy," he called. She did not answer at first, but continued dancing, but coming nearer to him. Finally she lay down on the rock where I could not see her. I could hear her healthy panting.

"Put on your stockings and shoes," commanded Jerry. "We ought to get along."

For a moment I hesitated as to whether to reveal myself. Then it was borne in on me very strongly that I should not in the least know how to talk to these strange beings, and I made rapid tracks for home.

Lucy was in soon after me. I met her again in the passage, and, showing her a franc, asked her if she lost it. She hesitated for a moment, but soon claimed it. I gave it to her, and she promptly went off to bed. In the morning I discovered that I had accidentally given her a sovereign.

IV.

All that I have told so far happened years ago. Let me tell what is happening now.

Going to a certain London music-hall recently to book seats, I encountered a glorious creature garbed in furs being politely escorted by the manager from his office to her car. As she passed me, we looked each other full in the face. I looked so long after her that an attendant volunteered her name. My little, bare-legged Lucy was a highly salaried dancer of international reputation. I don't know why, but it seemed to me to be such a pity.

Jerry, on arrival in England, took another name and rose to the heights of being a Labour member and an invincible strike leader. In England his madness was not noticed. And that also seems to me to be rather a pity.

Modern Minstrelsy

By Norman Douglas

It takes a youngster to court the Muse with the gay confidence of these Perse scholars*—we elders are generally too self-conscious, too ceremonious and fearful of failure. Everything is possible to those who see the world benevolently disposed towards themselves. Such a state of affairs gives courage. Most of us, I fancy, would tremble to attack a battered theme like "The Skylark." Not so these boys. Here goes!

> He clears his voice with a sip of dew
> That lies on the grass when the day is new;
> Then spreads his wings and soars on high,
> Till he's naught but a speck in the vast blue sky.
>
> His musical notes come fast and free,
> In a strain of sweetest melody;
> He pours them out so rich and clear,
> That his thrilling song the world may hear.
>
> To guard the nest his mate must stay,
> But her heart is cheered by his roundelay;
> When sunset comes with its rosy glow,
> He'll leave his heaven for his love below.

Viewed on the surface, such outpourings are homogeneous. Of course they are nothing of the kind. In later life our youthful bards, while not feeling so keenly about one thing, will feel more largely about all; in proportion as fresh experiences enter their field of vision, they will begin to synthesise; their verses—if they are to become genuine poets—will be the expression of a personality, and what is now merely cemented in their structure, will then be welded so closely that the joints hardly show. Their utterance will become sustained. Meanwhile, in this pre-adolescent stage, these effusions are a kind of *breccia*—flashing fragments of things heard and seen and felt (things read, too!),

* *Perse Playbooks.* No. 2. Cambridge, Heffer and Sons. 1*s.* 6*d.* net.

bound together by an irregular but sane imagination and often enough, quite perfunctorily, by the distressing exigencies of rime. Who cares? Poetry, after all, is not half as good fun as football, and not half as important —whatever the masters may think. A ballad, for a change? Here you are:—

> Dark and dreary was the night,
> Not any star did gleam,
> But over the hills a mysterious light
> Came like a fearful dream.
>
> And you could hear the maiden singing
> A sweet and old, old song,
> And the rafters of the hall were ringing
> While she was singing long.
>
> And now there came an ancient knight
> A-riding up the hill,
> And he would stop and think of the fight
> That the maid was singing still.

I confess to being hugely pleased with the spontaneity and healthy feeling of such performances. They are a revelation of what schoolboys can do, once the time-honoured and pestilential system of repression has been abolished. The authors of these two poems are of the same age—twelve years. My compliments!

* * * * * *

In due course of time, as befits their kind, they will grow into dignified bank-clerks or professionals—not, let us hope, without carrying into the dun maturity of average mankind some gleaming memories of those other realms which their teachers are now wisely unfolding to their eyes.

A small percentage will stick to verses at College, and write bad ones. This is perfectly natural. A boy may well find the world harmonious, but the adolescent who discovers nothing wrong with it is a dull dog. Contradictions, disillusions, and tumultuous aspirations crowd in upon him, and if he persists in his endeavours to express in verse what is, at his age, practically inexpressible—why, the produce will reflect this psychic anarchy. The signal is at danger point. For soon he may develop into a dream-like adult: a minor poet of the flatulent or frowsy species, past human aid. God help him!

There are at this moment some dozen veritable minor

poets in England—men who deliberately choose the vehicle of verse for the conveyance of thoughts and moods which are palatable and often stimulating to civilised readers. Of them I will not speak to-day. But as for the rest, their mentality is below that of the man in the street. Children, one feels inclined to call them; children who have ceased growing in mind and who, for all their variety, have one dominant characteristic: that love of laying bare certain private little affairs of their own which looks uncommonly like a spiritualised form of *exhibitionism*. They have naught to teach us, and rarely arouse that "sympathetic emotion" which critics ascribe to true poetry; they possess no remedial efficacy; they seldom delight; they are only interesting as documents. But then—everything on earth is interesting. And everything is a document.

* * * * * *

Nevertheless, I have a sneaking fondness for some of the worst of these bards; and the worst are pretty bad. The pathos of their failure to see life as it is touches some obscure chord of affection, especially when one realises how often, unequipped as they are, they try in a groping fashion to ennoble themselves and us. In any human appraisal a man's intentions must be weighed together with his deeds. And it is by no means a despicable class of folks who perpetrate such stuff; the third-rate sonneteer, *a priori*, is a gentleman, and this is more than can be said of some of our crude fiction writers who have never yielded themselves to the chastening discipline of verse-composition, nor warmed their hearts, for a single instant, at the altar of some generous ideal.

Intellectually considered, however, they stand condemned. Who relishes these volumes that pour in an unbroken flood from the press? Well, there are the songster's personal admirers, to begin with; on the Japanese principle that every man writes his poem for those friends who are legitimately interested in him. Next come a small number of good people for whose unguarded moments the books lie in wait on drawing-room tables and so forth, where they are "dipped into" with something akin to pleasure. But their most fervent lovers are those hard men and women who struggle

with teeth and claws for their daily bread, and whose uncritical palates are tickled by sloppy musings in rime, as they are by cheap romances or melodrama on the stage. Whoever doubts this need only try the experiment.

And who pays for them? Ay, how many of these dainty volumes are self-supporting? One in fifty, shall we say? This is what leads some of us to remark that the printing of facile verses is an evil which has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished. But nobody need buy them! *Caveat emptor.* The reduction of literature by Malthusian methods was charmingly dealt with in a recent number of this *Review.* And the minor poet would be the first to vanish from the market under the suggested conditions, for there is this difference between his merchandise and the bad novel, that, in the latter case, the element of possible profit can never be eliminated. Writer and publisher are involved in a speculation which affects them almost evenly, inasmuch as the most appalling prose-trash often turns out to be a prodigious success. This bland nonsense, on the other hand, is doomed to be still-born; it is therefore "money down" before a line of it shall be set up in type.

The case stands thus: certain youths and hazy adults *will* write bad verses; there is no stopping them, short of assassination, and—and some of them are rich. Here, then, we are enabled to put our finger on the culprit. It is the publisher, who cannot resist the temptation of pocketing a handful of sovereigns, lawfully gotten.

Who can?

* * * * * *

The older minstrels were men of learning who had absorbed the knowledge of their day; they were the pioneers of thought—torch-bearers to light us on our path. So we were pleased to imagine, at all events. Be that as it may, the majority of the moderns represent the rear-guard of culture, loaded down, as they are, with the philosophic impedimenta of Victorianism and a host of discarded notions of every age. Can anything be taught us by men whose idea of the macrocosm dates from the Reformation, who gravely *seek for purposes* on a planet where purposes have long ago ceased to exist?

Here, for example, is one of Schopenhauer's biological theories, turned into verse: it is hopelessly out of date.

And here is that musty and moth-eaten old teleology, the "Aunt Sally" of our scientific grandfathers. Again, in a stanza before me, the word "soul" occurs three times. The soul! Will our bards never convince themselves that we have now definitely exploited the possibilities of that unhappy symbol, refuge of empty minds ever since the world began?

All this becomes intelligible when one remembers that while vigorous manhood is destructive, youth and the poetic state of mind that corresponds to it is pre-eminently conservative. Youth loves to lean reverently on tradition and to draw inspiration therefrom; youth finds nothing more difficult than to follow Goethe's advice about grasping that living life which shifts and fluctuates around us. But there is one feature which must have struck all who have paid attention to modern verse—a wilfully retrogressive feature; a recent tendency in lyricism, I mean, to deal with fixed types rather than trust to the loving and precise observation which is the hall-mark of true poetry. Are there not indications to show that we are entering upon a second troubadour-period?

These boudoir-minstrels cannot be bothered to use their eyes and ears out of doors; and when they do, they are liable to odd mistakes, such as

> There came a day when Autumn's hand had dyed
> Woods, fields and gardens to one solemn hue,

—as if the variegated tints of that season were not a commonplace. Nature is once more becoming a mere stage-decoration to set off sentiments, more or less heart-felt. They still keep up the primrose, but it is no longer the poet's blossom, shy-gleaming amid moist hedgerows and kissed by sun and rain; it is a bold horticultural sub-species, grown in a pot, under glass.

They are stereotyping natural forms into artificiality.

Thus we come to understand the assiduous care lavished on the selection of a "subject"—everything, apparently, depends upon that. But this is beginning at the wrong end. Their Table of Contents may read very attractively; so do the menus of certain restaurants whence the traveller issues none the less famished, or bilious. The tritest and most wayward theme responds to originality of treatment, and

Browning alone might have taught them that gold can be extracted out of dust-heaps.

* * * * * *

Why, then, write such poems at all?

Why? To confute certain sages, of course, who have proved, to everyone's satisfaction, that lyricism must speedily die out—is dead, in fact; or ought to be. The growth of rationalism and so forth, are causing it to decay, like rhetoric and other forms of sentimental untruthfulness. Prose fiction will take its place with the few who still care for such light triflings. As for lyrical poetry, it has become an anachronism, a literary vermiform appendix, utterly obsolete. It belongs to the "older form of expression": *ergo*, it is out of date and ought to be done away with.

To treat our minor poets as a case of arrested development might make an amusing *jeu d'esprit*. But this solemn method hits beyond the mark. For my part, I refuse to be beguiled by that *ergo*, or by the specious parallel with rhetoric. For rhetoric applies to the despatch of public business where we have certainly learnt the value of clear and rapid argument, whereas poetry, like fiction, appeals to our private moments, when the wisest man likes to unbend, to be taken out of himself by impassioned, imaginary, or even foolish things.

Lyricism, good or bad, survives not as an idle relic, but because it replaces the actual world by another less true but more agreeable. It is a protest on the part of man's mystery-loving heart against phenomena as they really are—as they are, that is, *in the aggregate*, and not in certain selected moments which our poets can depict with poignant truthfulness. Like mysticism, it yearns to escape from the stress of mere facts. And why not escape, now and then? Are we to have only facts for our mental dietary, when that of our bodies is so richly varied?

They have been at some pains to show that Hamlet's soliloquy is a medley of anthropomorphism and figurative speech—primeval traits, unworthy of our age. All in time, my dear Professor! It is hardly to be expected that we who have dwelt on this earth for at least five hundred thousand years should adapt ourselves to modes of thought evolved only yesterday. All in good time! Meanwhile

we are still permeated with memories of a wild woodland past and with instincts appertaining thereto—instincts which suffer, and have suffered even in early times, from the ordered round of social life: whence lyricism, that soothes them. Action, and re-action. . . .

Such poetry, therefore, is not obsolete; I rather question whether it can be called obsolescent, and for the following reason. Speaking in a general way, the poetic mind creates realities to coincide with emotional states—this is poesis: a making. Now, since these states are conditioned by our bodily organs, which are practically unchanging, there is no reason to anticipate a decline in the poetic output.

But the quality needs must vary. The reflection of stirring times is a noble drama; profound and inspiring lyrics might be called their refraction. The present moment is not propitious for these effects. Home Rule may be vastly important, but it does not move passionate creatures like the Armada or the liberation of Greece. Add to this the poet's uncongenial schooling in peaceful days, which prunes unconventional and original thought and gives him the least chance of escaping, even mentally, from his surroundings. For your lyrist is like Johnson's Scotchman—he must be caught young. Our machinery is inadequate, just now, for catching nascent bards; they are not stirred to ponder, to feel keenly on living extraneous matters.

They can but dive into the past and become derivative—which is bad enough; or into themselves—which is worse. For when a songster, even a Tennyson, becomes introspective, it is time, as the Persians say, to put one's trust in God.

* * * * * *

Deliberately to create an international crisis with a view to the improvement of literature may be a novel suggestion, but will hardly commend itself to the politician; it would never do to have Margate blockaded by a hostile fleet on the chance of encouraging one of our minor poets to a couple of patriotic sonnets or an immortal ode.

But less heroic measures are quite within range. What is wanted is a new set of ideas, a fresh stock-in-trade, a sounder and cleaner ethical outlook. The elements are there, if our bards would look for them, for although

some of their favourite mysteries evaporate, others are for ever emerging. True it is that

> There was an awful rainbow once in heaven, &c.,

and now, alas! we have learnt all about it. But is the rainbow any the less wonderful; are the stars really more commonplace than they used to be? In fact, has anyone, save the young married woman, yet solved the riddle of the universe? So with the earth, the sea, and all that in them is; the springs of life, viewed under the schoolman's glimmering lantern, reveal themselves as far less remote and grand than in the dry light of modern research.

There are rich and exotic streaks of beauty in these new things.

But to assimilate them will entail a few changes in the old-fashioned cast of poetic demonology; a little thinking and reading, in short, for which these inspired dreamers are not always inclined. The old images must serve yet awhile: *mich und den Metternich hält's noch aus*, as the Habsburger is reported to have said. So each cultivates his microscopic patch of garden, and contents himself with copying his neighbour's choice of flowers, whence that fatal family likeness between all lyrical songsters of the second order. The outfit being slender, its combinations and permutations are perforce limited.

A little more suffering is what these minstrels want; at present they are too self-satisfied and unperplexed, too infernally glib. Suffering would make men of them. It would enlarge their repertoire; it would make them more human, more individual, and, above all, more truthful.

What is the unforgivable sin in poetry?

Lack of candour.

Now there is an artless and naïve insincerity—the incongruous fabric of adolescence; but there is also another kind, the insincerity of the adult, which is an abomination. And of the all-too-many minor lyrics which it has been my misfortune to peruse critically of late, a good third, I should say, are tainted with this organic *lues*. Unconvinced, apparently, himself, such a writer fails to carry conviction; he leaves us cold, resentful. One would say he was only playing some kind of game—a game with old conventional

toys—and smiling in his sleeve all the time, were the creative-feminine capable of such a feat of humour.

* * * * * *

There is a brighter side, no doubt. I observe a decay of sententiousness and humanitarianism; a desire, here and there, for clear-cut self-expression and a development of the artist's eye—the eye for detail; a revived interest in northern lore; some notable experiments in verse-structure. For these, and sundry other little blessings, let us be truly thankful. And there are one or two small defects that could be remedied so easily! Such is that curious trait of many of our bards to pass from the particular to the general, instead of *vice versâ*: surely this blunts the edge of the reader's appetency? Again, if art is but the expression or revelation of the artist's personality, and if, in eight cases out of ten, that personality be neither strong nor interesting—why go within? Why not become a little objective, for a change? This brooding pre-occupation with self is æsthetically unjustifiable. We cannot all be Childe Harold, and he was bad enough.

Mr. Osmaston gives some reasons for stating that the cultivation of poetry is "more than ever a necessity" nowadays. But what avails it if the songster is not at the level of those whom he is addressing; if the average minor poet conjures up states of feeling which the average reader has outgrown and to which he can only adjust himself by an effort? And such is assuredly the state of the case.

Take, for instance, that want of intellectual cleanliness—I am not speaking of the poet's morality, which, bless his heart! is above reproach—that want of restraint which would be rather dreadful, were it genuine. Is it natural, one wonders, to welter thus in mock-passion? Do people really behave in this absurd manner? Of course not: only in their nightmares. It is all make-belief—poetic matter out of place. True feeling is not so loquacious; it throbs in anxious whispers; it is sometimes almost dumb.

This is not "decadence"; and I say it with regret. For that word often implies what is new and vital, and therefore unintelligible—not yet labelled by the critic who, having watched how men like Baudelaire and Richard Wagner

have changed from decadents to classics in the course of a short generation, warily holds his peace when such a phenomenon appears on the horizon, and waits events. Homer was the greatest decadent of his day; one may picture his contemporaries reviling that "straining after effect and novelty," that audacious disregard of traditional methods. *Very unwholesome stuff*, we may be sure. And as to Sappho. . . .

No, they are not at all decadent and unintelligible, these lyrics, these excursions into the inane; neither are they dangerously iconoclastic nor even riskily flippant. They are quite above suspicion, once we have grasped their *raison d'être*. They are as healthy, and as exhilarating, as porridge.

Wondrous little laughter in all this! It is not the conscientious gravity of Young or Blair, but rather an atmosphere of subdued revelry, suggestive of a picnic in Kew Gardens. We cannot ask for humour from the querulous child-mind which is congenitally deficient in that mellow product; but a little merriment, at least; some sportive or mirth-provoking stanza, a satire on society,* a witticism in verse, a drinking-song. . . .

For all the mention of Bacchus in these poems, one would conclude that their authors drank nothing stronger than Ceylon tea. Which being probably the case, explains the absence of normal manly buoyancy.

And as to Venus—the poor old dame has faded into a vague but highly respectable phantom. The poetic art of saying pleasant nothings to ladies, or about them, is lost; lost is the art of sporting with Amaryllis in the shade. How one yearns for a stray gleam of Rabelais or Rochester amid all this flabby and nebulous love-twaddle! There would indeed be something in Women's Emancipation, if in affairs of the heart we men were to behave after the fashion prescribed by our minor poets.

And how the girls would hate it!

* It is significant that by far the best verse-satire which has appeared for a long time past—"One of Us"—happens to be the work of a non-poet, Mr. Gilbert Frankau.

The Sublime Audacity of the Church

By the Rev. S. C. Carpenter

A NEW fashion was set to English historians in the nineteenth century by one who bore an old-fashioned English name. He broadened the basis of representation; he extended the historical franchise to plain people as well as kings and queens; he found, in his own words, "a place for figures little heeded in common history."

The fashion, so admirably set, has been no less admirably followed. The attention of the modern historical student is directed to the story of guilds and parishes and grammar-schools rather than of thrones or conquests. It is universally admitted that Roger Bacon and William Caxton did more for the making of England than the Dukes of either Somerset or Gloucester. Piers Plowman was more important than Piers Gaveston, John Ball than John of Gaunt. And a third John, whose surname differs only by a single letter from that of the mad priest of Kent, is none other than the hero of the tale.

The manner has also become popular with those who describe contemporary life. By some of them it has even been pushed to lengths which might have seemed inhuman to the humane John Richard Green. Description has been sharpened into analysis. The present generation is analysed to the last corpuscle of its blood. Our holidays are photographed. Our very tastes are criticised, codified, compared. Our habits, of reading and recreation, are made in the newspapers the material of symbolic pictures, a studious, or pleasure-seeking, series of large, larger, and colossal men. The comparative statistics of our attendance at church or at the Oval are personified by Tom Thumb and Daniel Lambert. Our health, our industry, our unemployment are translated into curves. We ourselves are explained in economic, or even in eugenic terms. The sociologist reduces the mean streets of York or London

to parallel columns of protein and carbo-hydrates. The novel is democratic. The baronet, depraved but dashing, no longer strides across its too susceptible pages, breathing defiance on the disinherited hero and sylph-like heroine till the final chapter. He has either sold his evening dress and his cigar-case and has become a chauffeur, or he has disappeared and is replaced by what seem to be random selections from the undistinguished herd. We are invited to study the morbid psychology of assistant masters at inferior schools, the rise and fall and resurrection of a draper's salesman, the cynical philosophy of waiters, the unendingness of life from day to day, and even from hour to hour, in the Five Towns. The proletariat (blessed word!) is praised and blamed and canvassed and cajoled. The Poor Man's House is claimed, in an enthusiastic volume, to be the temple of all the virtues, or condemned, on Primrose platforms, as the hatching-bed of Budgets, strikes, and revolutions. Grumbles are heard for the first time about the rights of such obscure persons as parents, physicians, curates, and Private Members. Even the most voiceless (politically speaking) and down-trodden part of the entire community has begun to lift up both head and hand.

There is no doubt that this is right. It is good that dumb murmurs should find expression. And it is good, too, to be able to think that they have found the true expression, on the whole. But it cannot have been easy. The intellectual difference, rare in itself, which constitutes the gift of expression, is still more rarely coupled with the power of spiritual identification. To sit in the House of Commons as a Labour Member must involve, among other things, a constant strain on memory. *Orare* is so soon divorced from *laborare*. And, indeed, to represent is difficult at all times. It was the discerning Horace who remarked how hard it was *proprie communia dicere*, to find, remember and reveal the distinctiveness of the persons who are exactly like their neighbours and the things which everybody knows. But still it can be done. It is done, though difficult. And in the main it is done honourably. The motives are sound. They are either historical completeness or scientific exactness or artistic perception or genuine altruism or healthy self-assertion. Occasionally they are more sinister.

Whereas the sociological hammer is a harmless and even a useful instrument, whereas votes and petitions are recognised channels of popular opinion, there is nevertheless a note of sordid flatness about the tap of certain hammers which have usurped an honourable name. There are pleading voices which collect signatures for base petitions. Too many are employed in expressing, or, as they would perhaps say, "voicing," by the obscene midwifery of prejudice or passion, the fascinating—and fascinated—individuality of anyone who has a vote.

But these are only the abuses of democracy, the occasional fungi that disfigure common land. The main conclusion is satisfactorily certain and certainly satisfactory. The people have arrived. As a fact, utter and absolute, known to the Recording Angel and a few other unbiassed philosophers, the population of the world has always consisted of men, women, and children; but the fact has only just become common knowledge. "We are all Socialists now" was, twenty years ago, an amusing, picturesque misstatement. But anybody nowadays can say, with solemn and almost boring truthfulness, "We are Society." It is not, perhaps, absolutely certain that the devil is dying. It is beyond question a truism that the dictator is dead.

And what, amid all these great discoveries, has the Church been doing? To be quite candid, the old lady has been not a little startled. Like Mrs. Stephenson, when George took out his patent for a locomotive, she was alarmed and puzzled by her son's discoveries. Like Mrs. Watt, whose kitchen-fire contained the promise of a conflagration almost as great as that inaugurated by Master Latimer and Master Ridley, she was at first a little flustered. When critics say (as they do say) to her, "You have lived your life. You are now a picturesque old ruin, standing in a deserted swamp. Nobody belongs to you except a few suburban people at a fair, but not the best, level of education. You do not tap either the masses of the population or the real leaders. You have been left high and dry, or low and stagnant, as the case may be, by advancing civilisation," what is she to say? What is the answer to all this?

The equanimity of Mrs. Stephenson was probably restored and her family pride much gratified when she rode

with her bundle into Darlington behind George's engine, and Mrs. Watt had moments of much more than compensation when she pointed out to her cronies that the source of the industrial revolution was the very kettle from which the tea had just been made. But the Church has more than that. As soon as the temporary fluster of so nerve-racking a crisis has subsided, she reveals her real mind. The old lady of Glastonbury and Lambeth has a far profounder answer than either of the other two. The answer has the incredible insolence of fact. The Church, with the fantastic courage that sometimes accompanies both physical insignificance and personal modesty, has been once again evolving a revised method of applying her perpetual answer to such challenges—the answer which always arouses morose intellectual irritation or peals of profane laughter, as the case may be, but is nearly always perfectly true. The answer is indeed sublimely audacious—"We knew it all the time."

1. We knew that the poor man must be considered first. Partly because he is most numerous. Partly because the other people are more able to consider themselves. That is our first apology for existing in these democratic days. If it be argued that the right to breathe depends on the capacity to breathe freely, our answer is "We do." The Church is Catholic, that is to say, it includes all kinds of people. In theory, I suppose, everybody knows that the word "Catholic" means universal, and everybody ought to know that "universal" implies that the conditions of entrance, membership, and office-holding are other than financial. But let the claim to Catholicity be tested.

(*a*) As a matter of history it is only necessary to mention that the Church for the first three years of its existence consisted entirely of twelve poor men and a carpenter's widow, and that to these other poor people were subsequently added. It is true that the movement was just saved from being less than Catholic by the adhesion of one Joseph, who owned suburban land, and a member of the servant-keeping class in the best part of Jerusalem, but many of them were slaves. Men like Saul and Barnabas faced social extinction when they threw in their lot with the obscure and unlicensed sodality. Not (Lord deliver us!) that they can be supposed to have solemnly determined

not to brag of it. Like all those who have done really splendid things, they were not conscious of it at all.

(*b*) Even in the Middle Ages, when the Church had become "established," vocal, pictorial, the quintessence of picturesque mediævalism is not in Pope or prelate or his most Catholic Majesty, but in the peasant hearing Mass and swearing "By our Lady." Mr. C. G. Coulton has done his best to dissipate what he considers futile and pernicious notions about the happiness of the Ages of Faith. But I do not think that he can take from us our belief that they were ages of faith, or, at least, of superstition. The poor men may have grumbled, but they really put their pennies into Peter's box. Their children may sometimes have played truant, in the absence of an attendance-officer and a "B" committee, from the monastic schooling, but, if they went, they did receive the education of which monarchs were afterwards thankful to avail themselves, which sometimes made the monarchs tremble on their thrones. The scholarship-ladder is older than the L.C.C. Humanity has been defined as a man who lives and learns for ever, but his learning is various and sometimes contradictory. In the Church, of whose history the mediæval period is only the most purple patch, you have the much more remarkable spectacle of unnumbered millions who have actually learned and profess with an astonishing degree of unanimity a definite system of belief and conduct, who have in some way acquired a knowledge of Christ that amounts to considerable intimacy. The testimony of these witnesses is not in the least invalidated by the fact that they are dead. The Christian idea of the sacredness of tradition is simply due, as a notable modern defender of tradition has pointed out, to the far-sighted habit of mind which insists not only on broadening, like the Reform Bill or John Richard Green, but on lengthening, the basis of representation. It is said that an Englishman will not, as a rule, admit defeat. The Church not merely defies, but actually denies, the disfranchisement of death.

(*c*) There remains the present age. Ecclesiastical audacity nowadays invites instant ridicule. Its ground is hotly disputed, and, to a considerable extent, disproved. It is easy to point to instances of snobbery and to make unfavourable comparisons. There is much that looks like despotism. There is, for instance, the rare but terrible

phenomenon of clericalism. (There is also anti-clericalism.) The parson is certainly the person of the parish. But it is quite as true to say that it is the parish of which he is the person. To a certain extent he, too, is confronted by the problem of the Labour Member, but in his case forewarned is forearmed. He knows that his point of view is different. He faces from a frankly opposite position the people who are not really his constituents. The Labour Member is honourably distinguished by the swiftness of his running and the straightness of his course, but handicapped by having his eyes fixed permanently in the front of his head. But the parson knows people as the gardener knows soil. And he can produce nothing except what the soil—and the seasons—give him. Supernatural sanctions, as I say, depend on popular acceptance—and on being really supernatural.

Everyone knows that the Houses of Convocation consist almost entirely of gentlemen, that pew-rents are anti-social, that many a frock-coated sidesman is eaten up with class-prejudice and class-misunderstanding. A child could express—in fact, the London street-children often do—a natural, Christian resentment of all this. It is hardly worth while to retort by commenting on the unduly prosperous appearance of the backs in Club bow-windows on Sunday morning, by declaiming against suites of private cabins on Atlantic liners, by analysing the spiritual obscurantism of the first-class carriage in the City train.

It is easy, too, to point to other societies which are more specifically democratic. Everyone knows that the Anti-title League is more purely antititular, that the Political Reform Association is more simply politically reforming, that the Agrarian Society (I invent the names at random) is more devoutly and whole-heartedly agrarian, than the Church. You might with equal fairness complain that the Church of England Men's Society consists more wholly of Church of England men, that the Bishop of Tooting addresses himself with more undivided zeal to the special needs of the South-Western suburbs, or that the M.A.B.Y.S. has a more single eye to the noble cause of befriending the young servants of the metropolis. A specialist may be expected to specialise efficiently. It is a poor society that cannot chew its own bit. But the Church

is Catholic. She has bitten off so much. She has taken a large, nay, an universal, bite.

There are, of course, societies existing for the purpose of breaking down distinctions, in which distinctions are broken down. Sometimes more obviously than in the Church. There are highly specialised environments in which ambassadors hobnob with boiler-makers and a countess is the comrade of the lighterman. This is good, but a thought too self-conscious. The Church is the only body which has ever done anything like this casually, absent-mindedly, without thinking about it. The phenomenon of the West Ham Socialist Council enrolling the Duke of Rutland as a country-member would have its value as a protest against class-distinctions, but on both sides it would smack of pride. The Church has never heard of class-distinctions.

This, then, is the first answer of the Church to criticisms made in the democratic interest. It is a wide-spreading, but superficial argument. It consists of alluding to the fact that a large number of all sorts of people belong to the Church. Some day, probably very soon now, it will no doubt be necessary for someone to write an article pointing out that the Church has always included some of the poor rich; that she has never denied them the possibility of Heaven; that even in St. Luke's Gospel, which is distinctively, and, some have thought, too exclusively, the poor man's Gospel, the first stage of Paradise is actually defined as consisting of the intimate society of a notoriously wealthy Jew. But at present, in spite of political reform and social amelioration, in spite of twentieth-century literature, in spite of the Church, the balance of power is still almost all in favour of the powerful and almost all against the weak. The Anglo-Saxon portion of the earth, at any rate, has not yet become the inheritance of the meek. The suggested article is not required at present. In order to prove that the Church is, and has always been, Catholic in range, it is only necessary at present to show that she has found room for the poor.

2. A second answer corresponds to another merit of the modern school. They not only include in their description all sorts of their contemporaries, but they also analyse them.

Can the ecclesiastical analysis compare with theirs? Is there a Church bacteriology? There is. At any given moment it is probably a little bit behind the times, but, on the other hand, the times are generally a little bit in front of truth, so that in the long run the Church is right. This is really an important argument for the Church, that she does not go too fast. It is, of course, worth noting, and to the Church's credit, that she is much concerned with important, but easily forgotten, present values; that she is the only society which provides for the expression, in a way that is neither vulgar nor sentimental, of the vague longings of the multitudes who neither read nor write; that she controls elemental human nature by elemental means of grace. But the second main argument is that she can afford to wait.

The Church has often been compared, in derision, to an ostrich. I make the comparison in sincere and humble praise. The enemies of Stephen stoned him with stones, and he died. But those stones were so soon digested. The static thinker, stone in hand, scores a cheap victory when he finds that the Vicar acquiesces in oppression or has never heard of this *Review*. The Vicar's martyrdom is less glorious than that of Stephen and much more deserved. But the humiliation of the Vicar is the seed of the Church. The witnesses lay down their garments at the feet of a young man who is presently to rend those garments with the remorseless logic of inspired conviction into rags and tatters. And even at the moment conditions are changing. An astonishing thing happens. The stones fly briskly. But the Vicar makes stepping-stones of them, and rises from his dead self to higher things. *Stupor mundi.* The amazed throwers are initiated into the working of the divine law of recovery. The Church lays a stimulating finger between their comparatively defenceless ribs, and says, "My boy, you must be dynamic. Come back and look at me in ten years' time. Move on."

Ecclesiastical analysis has not forgotten what is past, and makes allowance for the future. A young man is often startled when an old friend of the family springs upon him an acute estimate of elements in his character which he hardly knew himself. "But how did you discover that?" "Oh, well, you see, I knew your father." Even so the

Church knew the father of the present generation. She was often puzzled, it is true, by the problems which he then presented, but, in spite of superficial differences, the problems from generation to generation become easier to solve. The tragic irony of *Milestones* is patent to those who, unlike the actors, have seen the first act half-an-hour ago. The humblest pittite could remind the deluded gentleman in Act II. of the way in which he used to carry on himself when he was young. Ecclesiastical treatment may lack something of the freshness of a Twentieth-Century League, but it is founded on a mature psychology. It considers all the facts.

Moreover, it considers not only the old facts, which are forgotten by the opportunist flaunters of ephemeral quackeries, but the promise and potency of facts to be. The prophet is a person who can diagnose the meaning of travail of his times. The Lord showed His works to the children of Israel, but His ways to Moses. To Wordsworth the meanest flower could give thoughts that did often lie too deep for tears. An æsthete of the 'eighties would lose himself in sallow contemplation of one passionate poppy in a pellucid bowl. But the things which stir the imagination of the Church and send her to her prayers and to her labours are the leaps from the *terra firma* of experience into the terrible unknown, a wedding or a voting-paper, an invention, a baby or a book.

The correct method is sometimes difficult to remember, and occasionally the wrong method is applied by mistake. For instance, the Church's treatment of heresy is sometimes by negligence postponed until it resolves itself into sonorous formulas of exorcism or elaborate affectation of unconcern, but it is meant to consist of sterilisation at the bacillus stage. Her analysis of individuals is sometimes mistaken in points of fact, but, being psychological, or rather spiritual, not economic or physiological, though apt to seem uncanny, it is never indecent. It dwells on tendencies rather than on states. The Church is the mother of education, the godmother of hygiene. Her sacraments of matrimony and baptism are an older and more complete eugenic. Her pathology takes into consideration present, past and future. Her absolution wipes out arrears actually incurred, but intolerably crippling. It weighs and it remembers.

But it speaks comfortably to the distressed citizens of Jerusalem of a fresh start from now.

This second answer, then, is horizontal, evolutionary, dynamic, *sub specie* a temporal *æternitatis*, "wait and see." But it is always so intensely irritating, it bears such an unfortunate resemblance to the mud-stuck immobility of age rebuking the intemperance of reforming youth, that it may only be sparingly employed. Anyone who has ever argued with a Roman Catholic has felt the mixture of respectful admiration and baffled rage provoked by the shut gates of the Eternal City. Impervious to argument, impossible to refute, the position is, after all, incapable of logical demonstration, as well as being so aggravating. Therefore, it is not well to use it much. But always it will be there in the background, a notable reason why the Church can never own, or indeed suffer, defeat.

3. A third defence is neither circular nor longitudinal, but experimental, pragmatic. Its matter is what might have been seen all the time by anyone who cared to look below the surface, and has often been overlooked by the defenders themselves. For instance, a clerical platform, reared on a mixed foundation of half-crowns and blankets, is easily shown to be unsound and ineffective. It patronises and does not inspire the poor. But the dust of its destruction has hardly settled before the astute parson is seen to be really standing on the securer basis of Apostolical succession and Evangelical life-value. He beams through parochial spectacles, and says, "It's a good thing it was there all the time. I'd almost forgotten it myself."

I spoke just now of Mr. Stephen Reynolds' book, *The Poor Man's House*. Let me, without permission, apply his vivid and sympathetic picture of Mrs. Tony Widger to the Church:—

"She does nothing quite perfectly . . . but she does everything as well as is practicable, as well as is advisable. . . . Some people here greatly pride themselves on keeping their homes spotlessly clean, and their front doors locked, so that no dirty boot shall soil the oilcloth in the passage. Mrs. Widger says that her house is for living in. . . . How she keeps a steady head passes my understanding; at breakfast time, for example, when . . . breakfasts are cooking;

and the kettle is boiling out or over; and Tony is asking her where he has left his other guernsey, and everybody is talking nineteen to the dozen . . . and she wants her own breakfast, too. . . . 'Mabel, I want you to go out for me,' she says. 'Get me my purse.' . . . Then, with a wide-armed gesture, curiously commanding and graceful, she hands out to the child perhaps a ha'penny. 'Get me a ha'porth o' new milk, quick!'"

A ha'penny is not much, and milk is a homely and commonplace commodity. But possession of the one and an appreciation of the value of the other are a symptom at all events of life. *Circumspice* and *prospice* are well enough, but if you insist on narrowing down the issue to the keen edge of the present, the old lady has another answer, "Put on your spectacles. Look here. I'm doing it."

When a Cabinet Minister is asked an important question in the House, and he replies that he was hoping soon to make himself familiar with the statistics of the subject, the hope wears rather the air of being an afterthought. But if he is in a position to reply that his department has already prepared an elaborate examination of the whole problem, with suggestions about its cause and a promise of legislation for its cure, and that the papers are even now on the table of the House, he has a better case. If, further, he finds it possible to say that the matter falls within the application of principles laid down by Alfred and re-affirmed by nearly every statute of importance between the Constitutions of Clarendon and the Liberty Act of 1913, that all the County and Borough Councils and Boards of Guardians in the kingdom have undertaken to co-operate in every way, that Postmasters and policemen have standing orders to act in the manner suggested by the honourable Member, if, as I say, our Minister is fortunate enough to be able to reply in some such terms as these, the voice of criticism will be silenced and the projected supplementary questions will die unborn upon the Parliamentary breeze.

It is surely a reasonable claim to make that we should be judged by the sum of what we are trying to do, that the people who think Church-life is waste of time or mischievous should see it steadily and see it whole. It is perfectly true that many clergymen spend their time in incessant and feverish small activities. But the Church

itself, and as a whole, when challenged to say what she is doing in the democratic interest, remembers her real mind. Her real object is one of which the promotion of democracy, in the ordinary political sense of the word, is a small, but rather interesting part. The Church exists to save souls, in other words, to rescue, recreate, and build up characters. If the Agrarian League, for instance, is sound and good, she will keep a corner of her heart and an attic of her brain for it; but, after all, there are many other things to be considered. Our Lord came into the world to break "the obscene empires of Belial and Mammon." That was His main purpose. His method was always to fulfil whatever was capable of fulfilment, and to destroy only that of which the destruction was indispensable. He could not stay to divide men's inheritances for them, and He was singularly unresponsive when He was asked about times and seasons and tariffs and taboos. His mission was to rescue the soul or character of humanity. Things being as they are in this unimaginative world, it was no doubt essential for Him to be one of the majority, to support Himself by working at a trade. It would have involved a further strain on faith if He had been born to the royal purple or great wealth. Therefore, it is well that He was of the people. It is well, too, that He was the Great Layman. A priestly Christ would be discounted instantly and perhaps overmuch. It is probably not wrong to say that He was on purpose neither priest nor king. His aim was rather to establish the truth that the Son of Man, poor layman as He was, was yet the true king and the eternal priest. Not, as is often said, to assert the inherent royalty and the intrinsic priesthood of humanity as such, but to enrich the poor waters of an ignoble stream by pouring into them the potent reinforcement of a nature that was perfect and a grace that was divine, to convey to those whom He was not ashamed to call His brethren that they would now be able to respond to His call and be saved by His redemption. And it was all expressed in terms of themselves, flesh and blood, and birth and death, and bread and wine. It was "a new," and yet "a living way."

If this be true—and it is, of course, a thing at which even the devout imagination reels and staggers in Pentecostal delirium, a thing which makes all Christians tremble with humility and stamp with pride—if this be true, it is

not wonderful that He found no leisure to peer into people's pockets, that He never could remember which of them wore crowns. If He laid, as He did, the foundations of modern democracy, He laid them in His spare time, with His left hand. It was a by-product of His energy. Nor is it wonderful that His Church, in dealing with the class-distinctions that war against the soul, should meet them not with the laborious battleaxe of combat, nor with the cool marksmanship of philosophic scorn, but with the exterminating dynamite of sheer indifference.

To the very natural question why the Archbishop of Canterbury does not on every occasion roll up his sleeves and fling his apron on the floor for, say, Women's Suffrage (I wish myself that he would do it sometimes), there is a complete and crushing answer. He is probably restrained from doing so by his knowledge of the parlous condition of British opinion about the connection between theology and conduct, by industrial unrest, by revision of the Prayer Book, and by the spiritual needs of Westminster and Lambeth and Western Canada. The Church is not going to commit herself—nor the Archbishop to commit her—wholly to any single part of the campaign. You cannot expect the engine-driver to be always taking the flies out of the eyes of all the passengers. He is too busy; and his hands are dirty. The illustration is practical. Scrupulous, high-minded persons, who do not believe in Bishops, will think the latter part of it offensive. But it is really affectionate, and necessary. Affectionate, because it is an endearing, human, family touch. The household of faith can often see *paterfamilias* in his shirt-sleeves (that is why the original question was so natural) before he has washed his hands. To watch father shaving, without coat or collar, is one of the most valued privileges of childhood. And necessary, because it meets an obvious rejoinder.

The obvious rejoinder is this: "If, as you say, the Church is never going to commit herself to any movement, if she talks loudly about Christian policy, but on questions of practical politics is dumb, it simply means that she is always sitting on the fence and will not come down till the battle is over." But I said, "wholly to any single part of the campaign." The fundamental dogma of the Blue Book and of Mr. Rowntree and Mr. Arnold Bennett

and Mrs. Pankhurst is, I suppose, that every person has a right to count as one, that if the whole truth were known about each individual, the individual would leap at once into a position of public interest and considered equality of opportunity. But this is, and has always been, the third of the three dogmas of Christianity—Christ, God, the Church. It is perhaps the first in order of observation, but logically the third. Christianity is by no means identical with modern democracy. Christianity is the mother of a larger family, and modern democracy is her beloved, promising, unruly child. To the injured accusation of Tony that Mrs. Widger had not fetched him his tobacco, her not inadequate reply would be that she was mending his only trousers or cooking his necessary food.

4. I do not conceive that it is part of my business here to give away the case against the Church. But I have not the smallest objection to its being stated, or even, if it will save anybody any trouble, to stating it myself. In fact, I am not quite sure that it is not my business after all. To take the wind out of your opponents' sails by invalidating their finest arguments is a valuable controversial method, too much neglected by the meek defenders of the faith.

So let me make all possible admissions. Bishops inhabit palaces. The Church is still the victim of Establishment. Whereas she formerly persecuted, now she compromises. We pat our opponents on the back instead of paying them the more genuine compliment of fighting them without bad temper and pulverising them without mercy. We shake hands when we ought to shake our fists. We smile instead of excommunicating, and put out the fires of spiritual conviction with torrents of broad-minded drivel. And we are sometimes guilty of maintaining a theory of the value of religion, advanced by an otherwise dissimilar pair of writers, Voltaire and the author of "When It Was Dark," but abhorrent to all true Liberals, the policeman-theory.

Our intellectual obscurantism is a more venial sin. Its posterity, if it has any, will soon be destroyed and in the next generation will be clean put out. An antiquated teaching, which ignores the difference between monolatry and monotheism and guilelessly ascribes all the Proverbs to King Solomon, makes much less difference than a young

student of critical theology would think. What really matters is the substitution, not only in sermons but in schools, of antiquarianism for religion, of archæological information about the Sanhedrin or Jabbok or the aquatic creatures of the Bible for a Gospel by which to live. Teachers who have visited the British Museum, and by some oversight were allowed to come away, give up the Catechism in return for the dimensions of the Temple, *chrusea chalkeiôn*, the worth of a hundred oxen for the names of nine. They have the names with perfect accuracy. They are not ignorant. But to be silly is worse than to be ignorant. Things which would (rightly) make a Divinity-Professor sick may edify a rustic congregation. But "stones in sermons," or subsidiary information couched in a sing-song jargon of would-be Elizabethan English, is more soul-destroying than pious imaginings, such as I have read in the published discourses of an aged clergyman, of the affectionate converse which Enoch, aged close upon three hundred, must have held with still more venerable Adam.

But, as Quintilian said of Latin literature, our chief failing is in comedy. There are, of course, *locum tenentes classicum* in Brother Juniper and Mr. Collins. "Sir Roger in Church" is a beautiful creation of gentle wit. Mrs. Jellyby is an amusing creature. In modern life there are Prebendaries, Rural Deans, and vergers. There are curates, pale, young, or muscular and breezy. But of conscious comedy or irony or wit we produce all too little. Degenerate children of Elijah and S. Francis, of St. Paul and William Law, we do not drive home the pungent paradoxes of our faith, or impale the wriggling Latitudinarian on the horns of our dilemma. Why is not theological controversy carried on with the vehemence, the courteous, law-abiding, but always pugnacious, vehemence of a football match? Savonarola has gone into winter quarters; Canossa is closed for redecoration and repairs. The hill of judgment and the watch-tower of the consciences of kings is become a meeting-place of *char-a-bancs*, the joy of trippers, the pasture of them that take their lunch. How is it that no one quotes the Magnificat at American elections, or the Ten Commandments at certain shareholders' meetings? How seldom, in conversation, do you hear a sneer at the

fine, fierce passion of a man like Lansbury capped with a word of Christian commendation, or the complacent optimism of comfortable tyranny with "Such a pity, isn't it?" Who can deny that if someone had arisen forty years ago to treat Herbert Spencer as William Law treated Bishop Hoadley, the world would be a brighter and more Christian place?

These are genuine admissions of regrettable weakness. But there is one "high failure" which remains eternally unspoiled. It is the Elect Lady's final claim to be considered the *tribuna plebis*. The Cross is not yet vulgarised. Good Friday was, to all political and worldly seeming, a complete defeat. It is only capable of being described in any sense as a victory, because politics are happily shot with a strain of spiritual considerations, and the world is not wholly on the surface. The Resurrection had, first and foremost, a spiritual significance. By this I do not mean that it was boneless or imaginary, but that in it spirit was completely and divinely dominant. Not only did it finally, and this time convincingly, affirm that there was and could be no claim for a visible throne or a material sceptre, but it further involved the renunciation of the former claim for maintenance from Nature and hospitality from men. It is true that its significance failed to commend itself to certain contemporary minds, but the state of those minds has failed to commend itself to the approval of the best human thought. Herod will still be Herod. The chief priests on the way home from Calvary that afternoon no doubt congratulated themselves on the satisfactory result of taking up a strong position. The obstinacy with which the Nazarene had met their firmness was, of course, morally regrettable, but really much the most convenient way out of the *impasse*. One would have wished, oh certainly, to avoid having recourse to extreme measures, but, after all, one had a duty to oneself. The incident had perhaps paved the way to a permanent solution, and anyhow it would soon be forgotten. The fact that Christianity rules neither political nor social practice in what are called Christian countries proves only that the countries are not Christian. The Church has not succeeded in abolishing election lies or in purifying lust or in persuading commerce that labour has a first claim on profits. But if we judge, as we must judge, by purpose

and intention, which is right, the Church with her pale face and bleating accents, or the world with its red hands and pitiless, but perhaps not quite remorseless, covetousness?

So then the great failure of the Church is the great tribute both to her singleness and breadth of mind. Single, because she has one remedy alone for

> All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
> All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow ;

and broad, because she insists on applying it to all of them. The scrupulous and thoughtful men who cannot bring themselves—and have never asked the Divine Spirit to bring them—to believe in the Incarnation, have nearly always admitted that it is a Supreme Idea. That the Most High, Who hath His dwelling, as the transcendental Hebrews put it, above the heavens, or, in the teaching of the Nature-mystics, somewhere "far more deeply interfused," or, as a philosopher might say, behind the concepts of the good, the beautiful, the true, should humble Himself to consider the things of heaven and earth, should embrace the great adventure which began with a message to a maiden and ended with pierced limbs upon a Cross, the plot of the story is, admittedly, sublime. It is at least a gorgeous legend, of royal generosity and appealing and compelling sacrifice.

The intellectual system, which this episode of Syrian history has practically created and is alleged to justify, claims with astonishing audacity to be *regina scientiarum*. Just because the Incarnation consecrates not the rank or wealth or intellect which belong to some of us, but the manhood to which we all belong, the science of it reaches out in all directions, and has affinities, controlling, sanctifying, maternal, with every science. The doctor, the psychologist, the politician, are dealing with material which will never be able to improve upon the dignity it owes to Jesus, and with problems which have in some form or other appeared already in the examination papers of the Church.

And the practical system, which a particular interpretation of the events of this bygone episode has in course of time produced, claims, with an audacity that is not really more wonderful, but astonishes, because it affects, more people, to rule all social practice. I said at the beginning

that the Church is not going to commit herself wholly to any single part of the campaign. But there are companies of churchmen who believe themselves to have taken, not a smaller, but a larger, view of the nature of the campaign, who cherish the conviction that the same maledictions which have proved so potent against, say, personal cruelty, may be applied to social tyranny. There is, for instance, a tiny band of students and reformers who are expressly pledged to the complete position, viz., that Christian principles should rule all social practice. The great world, which grumbles at the modern rate of wages and walks on sweated stilts, has never heard of them, and would take no notice if it did. They are not thanked by Parliaments, nor have they the *entrée* of the halfpenny Press. The puissant influence which boomed *The Miracle*, and may yet save England's credit at the next Olympic Games, is not vouchsafed to the cause they represent. A few pulpits, fewer platforms, and the little monthly *Commonwealth* are the stones on which this little David relies against big Goliath. But the brook is a brook of living water. It contains other stones. And not all of them are smooth. It may be that members of this society, and others like them, will presently be condemned as dangerous. They may be locked up on the charge, not of disturbing the public peace—even the irony of official persecution could hardly so describe the times—but of creating impolitic distraction in a state of war. But how can society or man die better than by facing, on behalf of the poor and needy, the fearful odds which civilisation has imposed upon them?

The Chinese Pale of Settlement

By Dr. E. J. Dillon

As there are still some places left in the world where a business man of push and staying powers can make a fortune out of nothing as by the waving of a magician's wand, so there are a few countries on the globe which offer analogous chances to the breezy politician, countries where advantageous treaties with local potentates can be concluded at a banquet, and vast territories with gold mines and virgin forests or fertile corn land acquired, so to say, in return for glass beads, glittering trinkets, and a few bottles of fire-water thrown in. And one political paradise of this description is Outer Mongolia. Down to the recent revolution effected by Sun Yat Sen and Yuan-Shi-Kai, this land of princely shepherds was commonly supposed to form an integral part of China, but since the fall of the Mandchu dynasty the theory has been started, spread and generally accepted that the land of Djinghis Khan was, so to say, merely an appanage of the reigning imperial family, and that with the deposition of the Emperor and the proclamation of the Republic, it regained automatically its right to stand alone. This return to its former state, however, lasted just long enough to enable it to sign away its suddenly revived independence. From Chinese it is become Russian. From being a magnificent potential colony for the crowded inhabitants of the Celestial Empire, it is transformed into a forbidden region whence Chinamen are more rigorously excluded than from Australia or the Western States of North America. Against this the Republic naturally protests, and will carry her protest to the point of military resistance whenever she can. Russia, on her side, insists, and pleads interest which seem vital. Under these conditions the two rival Powers must appeal to the sword. The only uncertain element in the matter is time.

The area of Mongolia, which lies to the north of China,

is approximately one million and a quarter square miles. And it is practically a Tom Tiddler's land. Inhabited it certainly is, but only by some two million grown-up children whose unsophisticated ways expose them to the wiles and snares of the over-civilised Western, and whose nameless ailments deprive them of offspring in numbers sufficient to keep up the race. They are gradually dying out. Consequently the relation, say of China or Russia or of any civilised people desirous of colonising or of exploiting Mongolia, to the natives might aptly be described as essentially identical with that of the Anglo-Saxon race to the Redskins of North America. In a few years the whole country, with its agricultural and mineral weath, will belong to the newcomers, and, to use a Mongolian phrase in vogue in the southern districts, all that will remain to the natives is the air. The Mongols are not State-builders; they are nomads whose wants are few, whose temper is even, and whose life philosophy, drawn from the deeps of Buddhism and discoloured by the channel of the Lama Church, may be summarised in the maxim: "Bear and forbear."

An intelligent Chinaman, giving his view of the Mongols in the principal Russian journal, wrote: "Is it worth while, at this conjuncture, discussing these beggars? They are downright idiots capable at most of dealing with ewes and rams. And there is only a handful of them left. Hardly three millions. Anyhow, China recks little of them at present, and nobody among us gives a thought to what they are doing." *

Those words were penned when the Mongols were busy asserting their independence. They mark the frame of mind of the Pekin statesmen, who must have smiled complacently at first when they learned that the Shepherd princes were dabbling in international politics and had conceived the ambitious plan of seceding from, or rather, rising up in arms against, the world's greatest Republic. Four hundred millions against two millions! But Yuan-Shi-Kai and his advisers, even his newly-appointed British adviser, whose breezy optimism helped to draw millions of pounds sterling from the pockets of enterprising capitalists, were making up their accounts without waiting for their host. The very circumstance that Mongolia is poor and unpro-

* *Novoye Vremya*

tected, a land with monasteries in lieu of cities, with monks instead of soldiers, with shepherds in place of princes, with stone and metal idols as substitutes for ethical and social ideals, ought to have suggested the query: Who is behind her? Yuan-Shi-Kai and his colleagues appear to have been hugging the delusion that Russia was become a pithless shadow after her defeat by Japan.

For it was no secret that Russia was the mainstay of Outer Mongolia and the hope of the other Mongol regions which nurse grievances against Pekin. What the Chinese could not grasp was that the St. Petersburg Foreign Office, without declaring war against the Republic or acting in any technically unfriendly fashion towards it, would assume the virtual Protectorate of the New State and champion it against all attempts to revive the old relation in which it had stood for centuries to the Celestial Empire. That was where the State Pilot, like Palinurus of old, was found nodding. Russia is the magnet, Mongolia the iron-splinter. The one would have drawn the other long since to itself, had it not been for the counteracting force of the Mandchu dynasty. That once dislodged, the attraction took effect. No Russian statesman could let the opportunity slip by unutilised. And no Chinese statesman with a particle of patriotism among the guiding motives of his policy could have hesitated to dam the foreign flood in its tiny origins. For the issue is not merely the ownership of this or that district, the sovereignty over this or that tribe, but the world problem: Is the Chinese race to be hedged round in a Pale of Settlement beyond which they may not circulate, and within which they shall be the hewers of wood and drawers of water to the once contemned foreign devils? And now that the ice has been broken by the European, the rest of the journey will be plain sailing. Chinese Tartary, Mongolia, Manchuria, and Tibet will all be closed to the race that once ruled them from Pekin. The beginning of Yuan-Shi-Kai's Republic marks the end of China as a world-Power.

The attraction which Russia has for Mongolia derives from a two-fold source, economical and ecclesiastico-religious. From the point of view of material well-being, the Russians are regarded as liberators. And rightly so, for they are emancipating the people from a yoke which

had become death-dealing. It had not always been so. For ages the ruling power in Pekin was Mandchu, and therefore anti-Chinese. Its policy was inspired by a desire to keep the Mongols on the side of the Mandchus, should these ever need auxiliaries at home. For this purpose Mongolia was strictly isolated. Chinamen were not permitted to colonise the country, nor officials to settle there with their wives and children. No Chinaman could purchase land in the province. For two centuries Outer Mongolia, which was autonomous within, remained faithful to its suzerain, and enjoyed in return the boon of untroubled peace. Hence the instinct of national self-defence is atrophied. There are no native soldiers worthy of the name in the place, and even the most skilful Russian instructors will not avail to form any. The raw material is lacking. Peace, however, was not the only cause of the extinction of the warlike spirit that once rendered the countrymen of Djinghis Khan the terror of Asia and Europe. Lamaism, the most soporific form of Buddhism, lulled the nation's soul to sleep, and the people, who were satisfied with monasteries in place of cities, flocked in vast numbers of these tombs of manhood. More than one-third of the male inhabitants have donned the cowl, taken monastic vows and converted the whole country to pacifism.

But in time the Mandchus themselves lost their nationality, became Chinamen in everything but the name, and had no longer any motive to perpetuate the measures which threw an invisible but impassable wall around Mongolia. At first Manchuria, as an autonomous country, was metamorphosed into three Chinese provinces, and the population which had identified itself with the conquered race accepted the change without a murmur. In our own time the experiment was tried on the Mongols. But they kicked against the pricks. They had kept up their old customary laws, their traditions, their methods of administration. They had no knowledge of the Chinese language, and no liking for Chinese ways. Knowing that their monasteries would necessarily disappear under Chinese rule and busy cities take their place; that miners and factory hands would make short work of their nomadic habits and of the glorious freedom of the boundless steppe, they set their faces

against the innovation and looked out for foreign assistance.

But neither did the Pekin Government allow the grass to grow under its feet. The law forbidding the colonisation of Mongolia by Chinamen was abolished, as was also the statute prohibiting inter-marriage between the two peoples. Commercial and social equality for both was one of the proximate aims of the Government, and it involved the abolition of the trading and other privileges enjoyed by Russians. From the Chinese point of view this was, of course, the right course to strike out, and if there was any mistake in the policy, it lay in the lateness of the hour at which it was first inaugurated. Like the Young Turks in Europe, the Chinese in Mongolia favoured assimilation, and as they were pressed for time they could not be squeamish in their choice of means. Systematic colonisation was an essential point in the new programme. A Colonisation Office was accordingly opened in Pekin, and one of the measures which it called for was the creation of a commercial bank and the methodic exploitation of the mineral wealth of the country. Another precaution taken in anticipation of the unwillingness of the Mongols to be assimilated by China, was the despatch of troops thither. Two battalions of infantry were transferred from the centre of the Empire, and two divisions of regular cavalry were to be recruited in Mongolia and officered by Chinamen. This plan had advanced so far that a site for new barracks was selected in Urga and the work of construction began. A railway from Urga to Kalgan was also projected, a Trans-Mongolian trunk line which would compete with the Trans-Siberian and shorten the journey between Irkutsk-Harbin-Pekin by seven hundred miles, and render it possible to reach the Chinese capital from Paris in exactly nine days and a half, instead of fifteen as at present.

In view of a series of undoubted facts, one can hardly absolve the statesmen of Pekin from the charge of pursuing the iniquitous policy of ruining the natives, financially and otherwise, as a preliminary to ousting them from their houses, homes, and territorial possessions in favour of Chinese colonists. The devices adopted were borrowed from the usurer. In Mongolia barter largely takes the place

of cash transactions. As there is hardly any money in circulation, there is no universally current medium of exchange. One might almost say that the nearest approach to one is tea. What Chinese merchants usually do is to deliver their manufactured goods on credit and get paid in raw produce after the lapse of a year or more. Many of them prefer to wait much longer and allow the interest to grow. The rate varies from fifty, which is computed to be the average amount, to one, two, and three hundred per cent. The day of reckoning oftentimes comes when the debtor is least able to meet his engagements and has to part with cattle and sheep. In this way the Mongol of affluence sinks to the level of a mere shepherd in the service of a wealthy Chinese farmer. Some especially enterprising relatives of Ah Sin are said to possess fifty, sixty, and even eighty thousand camels* acquired by these methods.

Another dodge is this. Every prince, and in Northern Mongolia there are eighty-six all told, is bound to make a pilgrimage to Pekin at least once in his life, were it only for the purpose of investiture. It behoves him to go oftener if he gets entangled with his neighbours or is at loggerheads with the Amban.† Now a journey to Pekin is a costly affair. The prince must travel in state. He cannot dispense with the custom of making presents to Chinese functionaries and dignitaries. He must also invest a large sum in a gorgeous costume for himself. And the money for these things, which hardly any of the shepherd princes can scrape together unaided, is advanced by Chinese trading firms, who receive as guarantee the vouchers of the inhabitants of the whole district. The consequence is that the entire population of Outer Mongolia is in a state of chronic insolvency and servitude.

The Mongols are a simple, good-humoured, kindly people more sensible to concrete than to abstract motives. In the workings of their mind there is nothing intricate. Consequently they are not vindictive and are incapable of nursing ill-feeling for long. But against the cold-blooded methods of the Chinese even they reacted vehemently and persistently. For the cause of their wrath is ever operative. Lest, however, their resentment should die out or fail to

* Kusheleff. *Mongolia*, page 58.

† A sort of district Viceroy who is a Mandchu or a Chinaman.

translate itself into efficacious acts, the lamas undertook to keep the embers well fanned. For this purpose they preached friendship for the Russians on the one hand, and hatred for the Chinese on the other. And they found ready adepts. No more fruitful propaganda could well be conceived than this, carried on by the janitors of the nation's soul. Religion or its local substitute is a more influential factor in the life of the Mongol than any other set of ideas or sentiments to which he is susceptible, hence the will of the lamas is necessarily the will of the nation. And the political teaching of the monks was this: let us get Russia to befriend Mongolia if possible, and if this be beyond our powers, get her to absorb us. The White Tsar is our only hope. With him all things are possible. Without him we are at the mercy of our deadly enemies the Chinese and foredoomed to extinction.

The White Tsar is a household word in Mongolia. Few Westerns can realise the magic of this name. To the Mongolian ear it has a religious, rather than political sound. and is listened to with the awe due to the name of a god by a devout worshipper rather than the consideration accorded to a mighty sovereign by a humble subject. The Mongolian monks have succeeded in creating a kind of cult for the White Tsar among their own people, a cult which partakes of the nature of god-worship. To us Westerns this is an alien idea which we are unable fully to grasp. In Mongolia and Tibet the Buddha, and other deities which the Buddha would have repudiated, are continually being born again into the world. The present ruler of Outer Mongolia, the Khutukhta, is one of these incarnations. All the Khubilgans are also incarnations. Now in Tibet and Mongolia the worship of a certain female divinity named Tsagan-Dara-Ekhe, also sprang up and gradually acquired great vogue. This goddess assumes a human body from time to time, and is adored under two names and two aspects: as Tsagan-Dara-Ekhe, or the White Dara Ekhe, and as Nogon-Dara-Ekhe, or the Green Dara Ekhe. Now, at the close of the seventeeth century it was bruited in the tents of the Khalkas and other tribes that a wise and victorious empress had ascended the throne of the Tsars and was pushing Russian frontiers far southwards, eastwards and westwards. Thereupon the contemplative

denizens of the Mongol monasteries proclaimed Catherine II. an incarnation of the goddess Tsagan-Dara-Ekhe. And in virtue of this heavenly distinction she was duly worshipped in the land of Djinghis Khan.* Whether a closer examination of the Great Empress' claim to divine honours would have shaken the childlike faith of the nomads is doubtful, judging by the leniency with which they regard their present Khutukhta, who, although a monk, an incarnation of the Buddha and avowed to perpetual chastity, leads a life of dissoluteness which would open the eyes of a judge of the Divorce Court.

After the death of the Great Catherine, the epithet "White" continued to be applied to her successors, each of whom was known as Tsagan Khan, or the White Khan, and, as an incarnation of the same goddess, Tsagan-Dara-Ekhe. And now, during the rites symbolical of the beneficence of the great white goddess, the minds of the faithful turn with awe and gratitude to her human embodiment in the city of Peter. And from the Great White Tsar they expect life-giving succour. Lacking political instinct and deficient in social sense, they reck little whether their country is made independent or is absorbed by that of the great white god-man. The steps they have hitherto taken to sever the links that bound them to China were suggested by private individuals of Russian nationality who had nothing to do with the Government. I know for a fact that the St. Petersburg Foreign Office sedulously eschewed action of any kind and left the Mongols severely alone, until they had seceded from the Chinese Republic. They then chose for their ruler not any of the descendants of the Yuan dynasty of the Djinghis family, but their Pope, a Tibetan, the Ghyghen of Urga, known as the Khutukhta. He is the third greatest spiritual dignitary of the Lamaist Church, an incarnation of the Buddha, and supreme head of Lamaism in Mongolia. Apparently, most of the eighty-six princes of Khalkha at once recognised his spiritual and political supremacy.

The 1st of December was revolution day. Proceedings were conducted according to programme. The pastoral potentates assembled in the Palace of the Khutukhta and had resolved on quite a number of things which were far

* Kusheleff, *Mongolia*, pp. 62–63.

beyond their powers. In the first place, they promulgated the independence of their country, which was more than they could make good without foreign help. They declined to recognise the Chinese Government, and declared their resolve to resist it if any attempt were made to revive the sovereignty of the Republic. They refused to pay taxes. They expelled Chinese officials from their country; they recalled from Pekin the Mongol princes who were on duty at the Court there, and they forbade the colonisation of Northern Mongolia by Chinamen. All this was done before the Mandchu dynasty had abdicated. And the curiously worded proclamation issued by the princes and the lamas ran thus:—"For some time past Chinamen and Mandchus have been fighting in the interior, and soon the name of the dynasty Dai-Tsing will have vanished. Of yore our Mongolia was an independent land. For that reason we are decided to govern our free people congruously with our former customs. Henceforth foreigners* are disqualified from taking any part in our political affairs. From this day foward we dismiss all Chinamen and Mandchus from the posts which they fill, whether great or small, military or civil, and we hereby order them to quit our land without delay."

Those measures are intelligible. They were corollaries of the altered situation, and it is impossible not to feel for the wretched Mongols who were being systematically annihilated. But one cannot read without different feelings the terms of the following edict issued by the Khutukhta:—

"Henceforward in Mongolia religion will be systematically welded with State Government. Chinamen shall be compelled to embrace Lamaism. Provincial officials shall be nominated from among the adherents of Lamaism. The highest State officials shall in future wear uniforms of Russian cut and design; subordinate public servants shall dress in Mongolian fashion, not like the Chinese. The taxes and imposts which are present in vigour are repealed, and fresh taxation will be levied in accordance *with laws which will be framed in concert with Russia.*" That a sovereign Pontiff who has continually flaunted his irreligion in the eyes of his flock should thus arbitrarily command foreigners of any race to abandon their

* Only Chinamen and Mandchus are meant.

faith and embrace his own, is characteristic of the overweening insolence of the monkish mannequin who now misrules Mongolia. That he should confine the operation of this preposterous behest to men of Chinese race was a petty insult more characteristic of the cunning Tibetan than of the easy-going Mongolian.

The new State, formed thus abruptly on a theocratic basis, cannot possibly stand alone. It is a house of cards. This truth is manifest even to the Khutukhta and his Ministers. And not only is it crippled at present, but it is paralysed for all time. Two millions of primitive human beings, simple nomads, scattered over an area of a million and a quarter square miles, without money, with tea as a measure of value, and exchange in lieu of buying and selling, are not likely to build up a stable kingdom out of nothing. If they were joined by all their kindred in Southern Mongolia, who are much more cultured than they, one might look more hopefully on their striving.

And strenuous endeavours have been put forth by a few individuals to get the Southern Mongols to throw in their lot with their kith and kin of Khalkha. This appeared all the more easy that it was the Southerners who had inspired the Northern tent-dwellers to shake off the yoke of the Chinaman. But once Outer Mongolia had cast the die, seceded and seen the long-cherished object within its grasp, it fought shy of the South. And not without reason.

In order to understand this aright, the reader would do well to cast a glance at a map of Mongolia. For the geographical conditions of this country have had a profounder and more manifest influence upon the historical development of its people than temperament, language, or race. The central region around which cluster the peoples of the Mongol family in the strictest sense of this term, is occupied by the Steppe Gobi.* Now there are only three parts of the district suited for settlements: the

* There is a vast difference, of which the reading public is apparently unaware, between the Desert of Gobi and the Steppe of Gobi which is alluded to here. The latter is relatively fertile, whereas the Desert Gobi, situated to the South of Mongolia and therefore in China proper extending from the Pamirs to the river Hwang ho, is a perfect wilderness. Gobi is a common name meaning "arid plateau." The Steppe is separated from the Desert by the mountain chain of the Mongolian Altai and Nan Shan. Here and there are sandy stretches in the Steppe, but the Desert is one endless wilderness of sand.

north, which is known as Khalkha; the north-west, *i.e.*, the province of Ulassutai and Kobdo on to Tarbogatai and Kuldja; and the south-east or districts of Tshakharia and Thokho. Historically, these divisions connote three separate political communities, of which south-eastern Mongolia gravitates towards China; the northern came nearer being free and independent; while the south-western district fitfully cultivated relations with Russia and through Russia with Europe.

That under those conditions the cultural standard attained by each of these sections of the Mongol people should differ from that of the other two, is natural. And that in their aims and their strivings they should also diverge considerably from each other, is likewise natural. The people of the South, for instance, having lived long in close contact with the Chinese, borrowed many customs from these without entirely losing their own characteristics. Hence separation was a feat not to be attempted by them. For the Central Government of Pekin could always despatch troops thither without difficulty or delay, and could therefore carry out its designs there unhindered. Hence one comes across compact masses of Chinese, ethnic islands, as it were, here and there among the Mongols. Chinese merchants have likewise made their mark on the commerce of the country, which is almost entirely in their hands. The land also has been bought up by the Chinaman in virtue of laws which were deliberately framed for the purpose of enabling him to oust the sluggish, thriftless Mongol.

The population of Southern Mongolia, therefore, being within easy striking distance of Pekin, lacks those facilities for revolution which are afforded the Northerners by geographical remoteness reinforced by the natural protection of the desert. Nor is this drawback compensated for by the more warlike temperament of the people. An attempt to secede on their part would be followed by the despatch of a large body of Chinese troops, which would quickly stifle the spirit of independence there. And Russia herself could do little to help unless she were formally at war with the Republic.

Again, the nomads of the North dearly love their freedom. Like the Redskins of America, they require a bound-

less stretch of territory for their periodic wanderings, and they dread those countries from which they have reason to anticipate attempts at colonisation. Now, Southern Mongolia is, relatively speaking, densely inhabited by two races, the Mongols and the Chinese, who in time might perhaps blend. Meanwhile, these people are suffering from dearth of land and are eager to move into the unoccupied fertile plains of Northern Mongolia. And for that reason the Northerners fear them. Moreover, they are in such close touch with the Chinese that the purity of Mongolian habits and customs is no longer intact, and for that reason, too, they are mistrusted by their northern brethren. Besides, if a union were effected between the two it is not the nomads of Northern Mongolia who would wield the sceptre over the united people, but the Southerners who, under the sway of the celebrated Prince Karatshin Van, the would-be imitator of Djinghis Khan, would lord it over the entire Mongolian people. And this return to militarism would be the abomination of desolation.

Lastly, there is the question of China's will and her power of asserting it to be considered. The Northerners are naturally protected from her armies by the Desert of Gobi. Hence they can amuse themselves to their hearts' content with realm-constructing and other childish games. The pastime in its incipient stages costs them little or nothing. There are no war risks to speak of. But in the South it is different. There the contest would at once become sanguinary and the issue probably calamitous. Why should the Northerners, who have neither the means nor the will to carry on a tremendous struggle with China, risk the little they possess for the sake of brethren whom distance in time and space has already made strangers?

Yuan-Shi-Kai and his British adviser seem to have missed those tokens and conceived a roseate view of things Mongolian at first. They fancied—if their published words be taken as exponents of their views—that the secessionist movement was mere child's play. To-day it is obvious even to them that it is the first of a more fateful series of events than even the overthrow of the Monarchy, and that the policy which China must pursue in Northern Mongolia, until she is ready for a campaign against Russia, can best be characterised by the words, "Hands off."

Thus the great Republic with its four hundred millions is condemned to look idly on while a little people of two million nomads rises up in arms against it, renounces its allegiance, and actually insults and persecutes its late masters. But to China it is gall and wormwood to reflect that her own potential colonies are being closed to her for all time. Excluded from the civilised countries of the world, the Chinaman is now being methodically barred out of lands which he possessed for centuries and might have colonised before Nippon was a military Power or Muscovy was received into the community of European States. A Chinese Pale of Settlement is being deliberately marked out, and Yuan-Shi-Kai is powerless to thwart the scheme.

Official Russia has recently shown her hand by signing a treaty with autonomous Mongolia, and China has drawn in her horns in consequence. Troops were to have been despatched to Urga to punish the insolent Khutukhta and his shepherd princes. The soldiers had already set out on their march, but were called back by order of the President, whose subsequent diplomatic devices present a fund of interest to the political psychologist. Between the Khutukhta and the Imperial Russian Government, as represented by M. Korostovetz, a politico-commercial treaty has been concluded which withdraws Outer Mongolia for all time from China's sway. Russia guarantees the Mongols against Chinese colonisation, Chinese officials, and effective Chinese sovereignty. All she accords to the world's greatest Republic is the barren name of suzerain. Commercial privileges, railway concessions, territorial acquisitions, mining rights, are all to be heaped upon Russian subjects, while the Chinese are to be rigorously excluded from Mongolia. Yuan-Shi-Kai is at his wits' end. He would gladly close his eyes to the danger, people say, or else resign himself to the inevitable. But he may not. His own colleagues have sounded the alarm. Some of them hug the delusion that Russia will give way if an army is sent to Urga to chastise the rebels. But the initiated, and among them is Lu Cheng Hsiang, the ex-Minister to Russia, who is again become Foreign Secretary, view things in more correct perspective. They know that Russia, having set her hand to the plough, will not look back. She is now morally bound to see her *protégés* safely

through the ordeal, and that involves financial aid, army instructors, and, if necessary, military succour. Russia's prestige as well as her interests is bound up with the venture.

Although autonomy is all that the Tsar's Government as the official exponent of Mongolia's aspirations has demanded for its *protégé*, it is autonomy of a kind which has hitherto been known under a different name. China is still to be the suzerain, but in a sense in which this term has never yet been employed, except by Turkey in Crete. She is not to have the ordering of Mongolia's foreign relations; that privilege being reserved to the Government of the Tsar. She is not even to be allowed to treat direct with her ex-vassal on any subject whatever. All conversations must be carried on through or in presence of Russia's representative. Nay, the suzerain nation is to be struck with heavy disabilities from which not only Russia, but all other foreign nations are exempt; its nationals are not permitted to own land, to colonise the country, to build railways there, or to obtain mining and other concessions. Yuan-Shi-Kai must indeed be purblind if he fail to gauge the import of these restrictions.

Non-official Russia, the class that supplies Governments with the motive power for new departures and "spirited policies," contends that the hour has struck for the annexation of Mongolia to the Empire of the Tsars by way of overture to a far-reaching plan of campaign. And already the feat has been accomplished in all but the name. Nothing less than a war with China in which the Russian Empire was worsted could now enable the Republic to thrust Outer Mongolia into the position of vassal which it has shaken off. On the other hand, the Chinese are becoming alive to the gravity of the peculiar danger that threatens them. They resemble a patient whose life is attacked by some most rare disease which interests the faculty. It is not merely the loss of a province which they have to fear. It is not any of the reverses, any of the disasters which may befall the other political communities of the world. Something far more terrible than the worst of these overhangs their ancient race. The 380 millions who are, so to say, suffocating for lack of breathing space are being slowly walled in. Their natural

colonies are being sequestered. Their people is being cooped up, encircled, and cloistered by the white races, and thus forbidden to increase and multiply further. It is being deprived of what it considers the indefeasible right of all peoples. And to heighten the tragic element of the drama, at the very moment when this process was in full swing and Mongolia and Tibet about to make their exit from the Chinese theatre, the official British adviser to Yuan-Shi-Kai was "twanging the lyre" in glee that China's horn was being exalted.

The Chinese Pale of Settlement is no mere spectre which will fade and vanish in the dry light of reason. It is a grim reality. To-day Yuan-Shi-Kai knows it. And the resourceful President, whose practical acquaintance with human psychology challenges universal admiration, is leaving no stone unturned to ward off the catastrophe. In Mongolia he is organising congresses of princes, conferring titles, lavishing honours, distributing money, appointing popes, and even creating Kings. In Tibet he has made or re-made a sovereign pontiff in the person of the Dalai Lama, who has been reinstated on the basis of an understanding drafted or approved, it is believed, by the Indian Government. In virtue of this alleged arrangement, China must withdraw her troops from the country and content herself with a nominal suzerainty symbolised by a Resident in Lhassa. Tibet, therefore, may be written off by the Republic as a bad debt. Manchuria is as irrevocably lost to China as Khalkha; and Chinese Turkestan is certain to follow. That the Republic will accept its lot resignedly is not credible, is not possible. A life-and-death struggle is certain, almost as certain as a mathematical conclusion. The only points doubtful are the time and conditions.

To-day China is unprepared for war. She lacks the wherewithal even for taking the defensive—money, men, and communications. Her presumptive adversary, on the contrary, is in fair fighting trim, possesses funds enough for a successful military expedition, and is hand in glove with Japan. The present moment is therefore unfavourable. All that the Republic can do is to watch, wait, and make ready. But so long as Nippon and the Tsardom are virtually allies and stand up for the maintenance of things as they are, China has no chance.

The condition *sine qua non* of a successful campaign would be the detachment of Japan from Russia. And of that there are no sure signs. Chinese statesmen are working for it. Dr. Sun Yat Sen, who is now sojourning in Tokio, is putting forward every motive to which the Japanese are susceptible in order to bring them to an understanding with China. And most powerful among these is the desire to promote the common racial interests of the two peoples who are now openly slighted, and will one day be politically paralysed by the white man of the East and West unless they join hands and equip themselves for the contest. I am told that Sun Yat Sen has converted many to his teaching, even among the influential politicians of Nippon. Whether it is true that he has exhorted the President to act boldly to chastise the Mongol, to occupy Urga with troops, and should Russia take their part, to accept her challenge, I have not been able to ascertain. But that a Chino-Japanese Alliance is the aim of a few prominent men of both nations cannot be gainsaid; and that the Republic can attempt nothing decisive until that has been effected is also unquestionable.

Meanwhile Japan's official relations with Russia are excellent. But Japan, like European countries, possesses a military party whose leaders favour grandiose armaments for both land and sea. That means expenditure, and Nippon can ill afford to lay out money during her present financial isolation. The demand made by the War Minister that further considerable sums should be devoted to the needs of the army, and that two new divisions should be despatched to Corea in order to render that province proof against Russian attack, is the real cause of the fall of the Saiondji Cabinet. The truth would seem to be that financially Japan is almost on her last legs, and that the stage at the end of the road along which she is now wending is national bankruptcy. That would appear to be also the view taken by the Finance Minister, as well as by a much more competent expert, M. Tadjiri, President of the Supreme Court of Accounts. Impecunious Nippon therefore cannot afford to provoke Russia or to change her policy radically.

The views of unofficial Russia may be gathered from the following declarations published by two authorities.

Count Bennigsen writes: "War against China is inevitable. If it be waged in the near future, the theatre will be almost exclusively Manchuria and Eastern Mongolia; that is to say, our troops will not encounter serious resistance anywhere else. At the extreme West the Chinese are too weak, and they still lack roads to Urga and Kiachto. . . . If war does not take place now, China will contrive not merely to strengthen her army, but also to prepare the field of action. A railway line will be built to Urga, or even to Kiachta, the frontier will be colonised by many thousand military settlers, who will isolate the Mongols from our dangerous influence, and then we shall have not only to dispense with their help, but we may even be compelled to wage the war on our own territory. To-day we need only a single army in Manchuria and Priamur; in a few years we shall also require one near Lake Baikal.

"War with China is inevitable. And as we shall never become China's friend, the sooner we equip ourselves for the tussle the better. Which of the two alternatives is more to our advantage, to consolidate ourselves in the East, to lay out enormous sums on the work and in the end to be forced to begin the contest just when it suits China, or else with a relatively small outlay to demolish that nation when it is to our advantage to do so and to cripple it for many years to come? this question I leave statesmen to answer.

"After a successful campaign we could assure our safety by forming two separate States out of Mongolia and Sin Dzian, and deny the Chinese admission by means of various restrictions" *

Another Russian authority tells us that many people "contend that it is an absolute necessity, and, indeed, the only issue out of the present political conjuncture, to annex to Russia, Mongolia and the northern part of Chinese Turkestan, as far as the Great Desert of Gobi, tracing the frontier along the line of the mountain chain Tian Shan, and further eastwards to the town of Tao-nan-fu. . . . I, personally," adds the gifted writer, "fully concur in this view, and for that reason I shall adduce data in favour of this solution of the Mongolian problem." †

"Our politico-strategical task lies entirely in depriving

* Count Bennigsen, *Some Data about Contemporary Mongolia*, pp. 39–40.
† *Mongolia and the Mongolian Question*, by J. Kusheleff, p. 91.

China of every possibility of advancing towards our borders and getting a hold there. And the means of attaining this is not merely to move forward our frontier to the deserts which separate us from China proper, but to occupy these deserts to the furthest extent possible by way of obtaining an esplanade for our Empire."*

To sum up: Russia feels bound to hinder at all costs the influx of Chinamen into Mongolia. Mongolia would rather be swallowed whole by the Tsardom than become a province of the Republic. And for China it is a matter of life and death to keep open for colonisation her vast territories beyond the Wall which are now being systematically closed to her. They are the lungs of the Chinese nation.

Is there a statesman who could harmonise these conflicting aims and interests without an appeal to the sword?

* *Op. cit.*, p. 93.

Democracy and Public Honours

By Aron.

It is inevitable that with the advent of a new order of Society many ancient and admirable institutions should be readjusted to suit the new conditions. Foremost among these is the conferring of public honours upon distinguished citizens. Such honours have taken strange forms in different countries and different ages. A button varying in colour and material to mark an ascending scale of merit, a peacock's feather, the Greek crown of laurel or of bay leaves or parsley, the English war-medal presented by a dilatory War Office long years after the event it commemorates, when the recipient is too old to be stirred any longer to pride or elation; an iron cross, a red ribbon, an arm or breast decoration, are some of the imaginings by which men have sought to express their desire to honour their fellows. In China it is said that honours are heaped upon a man's ancestors; perhaps similar distinctions may one day be given to the dead hero, to be treasured by his descendants or next of kin.

It is a natural and generous instinct to express gratitude for services to the community. Such services are often gifts for which no payment has been or could be made. They are gifts made, perhaps, in poverty, at the cost of arduous, unremunerated toil, at the cost of material advantage and prospects, at the cost, it may be, of life itself. The community accepts readily enough, and, having accepted, goes on its way rejoicing at life enriched by positive benefits or saved from threatened perils. It is not well that Society should accept with grudging acknowledgment and a voiceless gratitude.

With state honours the nation has nothing to do. Naval and military services are naturally rewarded by the Sovereign, the fount of honour; they must be more easy to award than the honours conferred upon the ordinary civilian. The pomp and pageantry of military service make

it comparatively simple to find appropriate expression for a nation's gratitude, but what of the black-coated civilian?

In all great ceremonial processions the civilian stands on his feet on the pavement; the great scientists, discoverers, historians, physicians, the writers, poets, and artists, the great lawyers, the social benefactors, disappear from view altogether. The civil element is thrust out of sight, or has to masquerade in a uniform. The crowd would rejoice to see the Ministry of the day on a four-horse coach, the Prime Minister on the box seat, to be followed by the Opposition leader driving his own team, with his ex-Ministers sitting behind him. Such crude imaginations need alarm no one, but a way might surely be found to honour distinguished citizens without an unseemly appeal to public attention as in a Barnum show, or an exposure of our public men from which they might shrink.

It remains a blot on all our public ceremonials that the citizen element of our people is suppressed. Why should not engineers and miners be represented in a procession as well as sailors? They are all public servants, the safety and welfare of the nation depends not only upon our public defenders, but upon all our public servants. Let honour therefore be paid where honour is due.

Montaigne, in his essay on recompenses of honour, argues that money gifts have not so great a dignity of usage as the conferring of some simple order or decoration, and that a money grant added to a recompense of honour "would but debase and abate it." It is a pious opinion which in these days might not find a general acceptance; but the right feeling of the world has ever so held it.

Knighthood on the field of battle was a dramatic and picturesque reward of feats of valour: the knighthood and titles that descend to our day may be fit acknowledgment of service to the State. But valour is not confined to battlefields; "peace hath her victories," which should have recognition. Party honours seem to grow in numbers, though they are the least understood of the people, in spite of the compendious glossaries supplied by the Press. All that can be urged is that public honours should be pure in origin, and that if there are *Party* honours there should also be *People's* honours—that honours should not invariably follow wealth, but should reward merit.

DEMOCRACY AND PUBLIC HONOURS

It has been whimsically said that there are "critical periods" for all English citizens in every year of periodic recurrence. These are supposed to be periods of anxiety to the man who wishes his name to appear in the Honours List, as of anxiety to the man who does not wish his name so to appear. It might be supposed that the citizen would always be consulted before his plain appellation of Mr. or Esquire was taken from him by the receipt of the golden spurs. But accidents do happen, and fantastic results ensue.

Lord Beaconsfield, after some hesitation, offered Thomas Carlyle a Knighthood (or was it a baronetcy?). It was a graceful act on his part, and the old Prophet was touched and gratified, though he could not accept so inappropriate a tribute. But how did the nation acknowledge Robert Browning or Mrs. Robert Browning, John Ruskin, or that exquisite poet Matthew Arnold. Mr. Herbert Spencer, whose fame was spread over whole Continents, whose words were read wherever the English tongue was spoken, who was translated into all European languages, whose books were studied in the East as in the West, had better have been a respectable grocer, famous for a well-advertised bean, for all the nation cared to show its appreciation. Yet perhaps a Continental plebiscite would have pronounced him the foremost Englishman of his time. It is true that Mr. Robert Browning was buried in the Abbey; but such recognition was more of a private than a public tribute. It was not given by the nation, and naturally did not come to him as a national tribute in his lifetime. What of the scientific and medical men who risk life and limb in the pursuit of some gain to science? Was any public recognition ever made of Dr. Barnardo's extraordinary labours and achievements? Has any recognition been made of General Booth's ministrations? We cannot believe that any Church or Chapel would grudge the expression of gratitude to these men. There seems to be some sort of feeling in high places that unless such activities satisfy the last scientific (*sic*) theories of officialdom, they must not be acknowledged as benefactions; must, instead, be set aside with faint praise. The truth is that while public departments are theorising and criticising other men's work, these workers of large heart have thrown themselves

into the mêlée and are saving, helping, healing; starting thousands of little child waifs on an honourable life journey, or perchance setting the despairing on the road again. If we know a better way let us try that, but we might give a tribute of admiration to such noble devotion.

In every other country but this the community would have delighted to honour these men, would have given them public recognition, and in so doing would have raised and educated public feeling. In a grossly material age we cannot afford to neglect the appeal to the ideal, or to leave unhonoured the men who fling themselves into the fray as saviours of their fellows, regardless of health, wealth, ease, pleasure, and life itself.

What shall be said of honours for eminent women? Doubtless the Suffrage world here sees a deliberate insult, with neglect as of intention. It must in fairness be admitted that, as woman's special work lies in private rather than in public places, her claims to public awards must of necessity be fewer. It is not possible to array the mothers of England, and after due examination classify them as so many undergraduates. The mothers of every country find their rewards in far other ways. There is one woman, however, whose unique services were acclaimed long years after those services had been rendered, at the very end of her long life. Miss Nightingale, it is true, received the Order of Merit before her death. That Order might well have been instituted in her honour, for the work was epoch-making, and has been an inspiration to East and West alike. There have been other women since!

The example of Paris has probably damped the ardour of the unemotional Englishman for commemorating his distinguished fellow-citizens. He is apt to resent the renaming of streets after, it may be, some minor celebrity of the day. He is not sure that he quite likes to see so many statues and busts of modern men in public places and gardens. He sees none of these things at home. Yet these things are an education, and if a street goes by the queer, long name of St. Vincent-de-Paul, the traveller is reminded of the good Abbé who, in unscientific days, devoted himself to deaf and dumb children, and was of the first company of men who sought to alleviate their sad condition. Martin Tupper Avenue is not an inspiring title,

but it might inaugurate a better state of things than so many Duke Streets and Davies Streets, which for the most part have no story to tell.

We have noticed the verdict of the ages that honours are best when they are divorced from money gifts. One exception of a notable kind should be made. It has never been the fashion to court or pay respect to the art of literature with us. Literature is a harsh, grudging mistress; in each generation the best work is often done by those who have never received a living wage. To be plain, it is sweated work, much of it. The public is hard to reach, public favour is fickle, and it is only after long, lean years of hard toil that the writer enters upon the fat years of prosperity. The writer often finds himself unable to make any provision for his family; too often he has himself been affected in health by the hard years of privation he has endured. Yet whatever his earnings, it will be found that he has been generous to his fellows. The grudging law of copyright, the greed of the public for cheap books, their reluctance to buy books at all; all these things, combined with the practice of long-deferred payments, have made the wage of the writer precarious indeed. No minimum wage for him, but uncertainty everywhere, and the prejudice of fashion, for there are fashions in books as in clothes, and we, as yet, are far enough from the Paradise promised by the late Mark Pattison, when every householder of a few hundreds a year would spend at least £40 from his income in books.

These facts are all commonplaces, but it is not so generally known how meagre is the Civil pension purse from which grants can be made. A very few hundreds a year are all that the Prime Minister has to dispose of, and even so it has to be dispensed with the greatest care and parsimony: the fund does not belong all of it to literature. A generous gift of half a million is needed to establish it on a reasonably liberal footing more worthy of a great people and of a noble literary ancestry.

Some have objected that it would be unwise to make the path of literature too easy; that we do not want to encourage men or women to become writers; that we might easily be flooded with inferior artists; that the law of the survival of the fittest is a salutary one, especially in art regions.

But even if the country had £5,000 a year to give away in pensions and to assist the deserving, the career of literature must remain a stormy one, and many must seek before one can find entrance to the inner portal. The increase of the fund, either by private munificence or by public grant, would be an acknowledgment of the vast debt we owe to literature.

There would seem to be a tendency to-day to resent the suggestion that some men rise above their fellows. Hero worship, we are assured, is old-fashioned, is a really vulgar tendency belonging to the dark ages, never likely to be revived in these enlightened times. It might prove inconvenient, too, in the new social order that any man should be carried shoulder-high by his fellows. Yet Mr. Hyndman, in his recent book, tells us that "the stroke makes the boat, not the boat the stroke." Human nature remains very much the same throughout the ages, and if in future we are to hear nothing of heroes, we hear a good deal of experts, super-men, and we presume we shall hear of super-women.

It is not long since mothers brought their infants in their arms to Garibaldi, that he might lay his hands on them and bless them. Strange as it may appear to-day, the same scene was witnessed in the streets of London not very many years back, though in that case the hero was an Englishman and a member of the present Government.

Experts, super-men, and super-women loom as huge, inhuman figures from the frigid zone where they sit apart: they may control and coerce us, but do they arouse our admiration or our love? The race of men and women is warm-hearted and warm-blooded, it needs ideals and enthusiasms; most of all to-day it needs an inspiring faith.

It is not generally known that the movement for the glorification of Joan of Arc was inaugurated by a young French positivist who made a cult of her memory, and year by year led the working men of Rouen to the several places of her martyrdom and death. The popular movement roused the curiosity of Mgr. Depanloup, who devoted himself to her memory, and from these simple beginnings has come her canonisation as Saint and the unveiling of her permanent statue in the temple of history.

Why, indeed, should a democracy deny honours to its

own children? Will it not rather exult in them? Memory in the cottage is short; rather let us say it waxes dim in the absence of all memorials and public records to remind the family of strenuous lives, to recall fathers and grandfathers who made many inventions, who did and endured great labours. We need to rekindle these memories and treasure them as a nation, holding them sacred, whether they come from the cottage or the palace, from a time of peace or war. All public benefactors should have their names inscribed in the nation's Pantheon, though perchance they lie where no stone covers them.

The democracy is coming to see that public honours, rightly bestowed and in the true spirit, are the best antidote to the standards of the millionaire. Our age, which suffers from a plethora of millionaires, needs especially a standard of public honours, or the world would find itself with no public estimate of values save the standard of Midas.

Honours rightly conferred affect the Society which confers them for good even more than the recipients; to these they come only as a word of encouragement and sympathy for work done, and for sacrifices made. Gratitude is a happy burden to carry; the frank, open acknowledgment of benefits received is a great indication of a noble spirit. In the words of Landor:—

> "There is a delight in praising,
> Though the praiser sit alone,
> And see the praised far off him
> Far above."

Postscriptum.

(1) We need an Order for women for work done in England.

(2) We need some form of public recognition for distinguished citizens who have deserved well of the public but are not in the ranks of the services, military or civil, or party-political.

What is Ours is not Ours

By the Editor

"Do you mind running?" she cried out excitedly, and, without waiting for an answer, my pretty hostess pulled up her skirts and began to sprint across the muddy field.

"We'll catch him at that corner over there," she panted, as I ploughed along at her side. "He's my boy, and I'm not allowed to see him yet."

"Allowed! But if he's your boy?" I gasped.

"He's only just gone to school," she shouted back at me, "and the master doesn't want me to see him for the first three weeks. So I'm—O, damn!"—the puddies were in truth alarming. On we went and reached the corner just in time to see the junior master leading some twenty small boys through the gate, to one of whom the young mother frantically waved her hand, blew kisses, and smiled with her eyes all moist, while a little cherub head turned round with a cautious grin—and they were gone; and I turned aside to examine the horizon, for she was holding a tiny handkerchief to her face.

"Do forgive me," she explained presently. "But he's quite a babe. He has to go to school, I know. And now he's gone from me, my only boy. You saw, already he's almost ashamed to recognise his mother."

An hour later, after tea, the other children came down, but just as I was getting on with the little girl, and the mother lay on the sofa entirely absorbed in the baby, the nurse appeared, ample and peremptory.

"I must have baby a little longer, Nanny," the mother exclaimed appealingly, "just ten minutes."

"I think you had better not," the nurse replied. "She was rather restless to-day," and without more ado, she walked up to the sofa, picked the child up, and in another minute the children were gone.

I was glad Sir Henry walked in at that moment, though plainly he was in no mood for conviviality.

"I say, Iris," he began, after shaking hands with me, "look here, both cars are out. One hasn't come down, and the other you lent that shocking old Mrs. Travers, and I've promised to send over and fetch Jack and his wife to dinner. It's too bad. What's the good of having things if we never have them?"

I smiled, and Iris smiled too. She folded her arms round her husband's neck and said in a mock tone of despair, "I know, dear. Haven't you yet made the discovery of life: *What is ours is not ours?*"

The remark produced quite a silence.

"By Jove!" said Sir Henry at last.

"What we haven't got we want," Iris went on. "What we have we don't have. Look at me! I can't even have my own children. I run across fields to have a look at my little Oliver, whom I shall only now see far, far away in the holidays. When I want Baby, she is being bathed, or she is asleep, or feeding, or ought to be asleep. I can only see her at fixed moments. I can't even have her in bed in the mornings because, because . . ."

"My fault, I suppose," chuckled Sir Henry, "quite true. And when I want to have a quiet evening with you, you're out dancing, or must go to a party or some rotten function. . . ."

"And when I want you," Iris interposed plaintively, "you've got a shoot on, or it's business or a City dinner. And when in the summer I say, let's go abroad, you say you've arranged to go a motor-golf tour with Johnny and Frank. And when you run over on business to Paris . . ."

"German measles break out in the house!" and Sir Henry laughed. "Never mind, cheer up. Have a cigar, old chap?"

"No, I won't take your last one, Sir Henry," I said.

"What? Has that fool James forgotten to fill my case? Now we shan't have any smokes this week-end. Of course. You must. What is mine is not mine, you know."

We were all laughing heartily now.

"What is the good of having babies if a mother can't enjoy them?" said Iris.

"Or cars for other people to sit in," protested Sir Henry.

"Or cigars?" I was delighted with my host's Manilla.

"Or a wife if she is always out?"

"Or a husband who is always busy?"

"Possession," I said, "is a great thing."

"But there is no such thing," Iris retorted.

"Possession is power."

"But power alone is useless. All life is useless alone. The greatest book in the world is worthless if no men read books. The life and soul of all Art is art, other art, more art. Power is dependent upon power, as there could be no life without death, and no light without darkness. Without men, the ambitions and strength of men, Napoleon would only have been a small, sour little man with a pot-belly, and even as it was the conqueror of Europe could not even retain the fidelity of his 'little Josephine.' Look at you, Henry. You own a newspaper which you tell me publishes day after day leading articles contrary to your own views. Old Sir John, who is one of the richest men in the country, told us the other night at dinner he would give all his wealth and his very soul to have a son, and now my sister has just had her second batch of twins, and her husband is a poor journalist on five hundred a year. The dearest things that a woman can have, that I have, are children, and there is my Oliver gone to school. His golden locks are cut. He is stuck into a ridiculous Eton jacket, and I have lost him. The child is taken from me. The little intimacies are gone for ever. And when I want to have my Baby, the nurse comes, and I am reminded of those odious things duty, discipline, order, which seem to be the three principles that matter in what you men call civilisation. Possession—there is no such thing, because there is nothing absolute, nothing final in life. We spend our lives talking about what we have, about what we hope to have, about what we intend to have, while in reality we have nothing, not even our own souls—certainly not you business men and politicians, certainly not we women, who are the slaves of vanity and fashion."

"That's quite true," Sir Henry interposed. "I run a paper over which I've no control whatever. I vote to order, mechanically, stupidly. I buy a hunter and my brother breaks its back the first day out. I take a wife with the inten-

tion of living a sensible, domestic and bucolic life, and I find she's out every night of the week philandering with other men. I'm dragged to a dance, and she dances all the time with 'dear Jack who is so good-looking.' I try to have a quiet evening and read a book I've been minded to read for months, and I'm told we've promised to bridge somewhere in Kensington. I buy an Italian old master, and Sir Hugh Lane walks in one afternoon and tells me it's a pupil of some Dutchman! I always thought the Boer War monstrous, and yet I went out as a C.I.V. I don't believe a bit in Tariff Reform, and doubt if any sane man can now believe in Chamberlain's artificial Imperialism after Canada's Naval Gift, and yet I vote with Mr. Bonar Law. I know the chief thing that newspapers care about is advertisement, and yet I believe what they say. I never see my real friends—I'm always booked to meet people I'm quite indifferent about. I go away because I'm run down and mean to have a real holiday, but I come back almost neurasthenic because I found I was off my drive and couldn't get the club through properly. I can't even lie in bed in the mornings. As for the children—there's Nanny, and that's about all I know of them. You're quite right, Iris. There is no possession. Why, I believe at this moment the wealth of England is dependent upon the German market, and the wealth of Europe upon the Jews. And yet we all go on fighting for money and possessions, which the more we obtain the more they benefit other people."

"It sounds terrible," I said, seeing that Sir Henry had exhausted himself. "Perhaps it's the life you well-to-do people lead."

"Oh," said Iris, "and what possessions have you, then?"

"Well, I've myself."

"And do you do what you want?" She said this so meaningly that I smiled.

"Not often, I admit."

"Do you ever?"

"I think so."

"When? Define!"

"When you ask me to dine with you," I replied.

"Ah, then you're not in love with me," Iris rejoined, "for when in love we are always unhappy and desirous. But be serious. Tell me. You write. Now do you dare

write the truth—about men, politics, art, books, life, love, anything?" Iris has beautiful eyes, and they and the question perturbed me.

"The truth! Well, hardly. No one does, you know."

"But art is truth. Isn't that one of your canons?"

"Idealistically, yes."

"But actually, no. You see, you are false to your very art. You simply dare not write a wholly truthful thing."

"Truth, after all, is relative," I said. "No wisdom is exact. What we call truth is only opinion, attitude."

"Quite so," said Sir Henry, "but the question was, do you dare write your *deliberate, honest opinion*?"

"What about?"

"Ah, don't hedge. About politics, say. Or the most natural thing in the world, Love. Why, I can't go to an English theatre, the plays are so silly and artificial."

"Not about love, to be sure. It's the forbidden fruit since Puritanism, you must remember. As for politics, there are only two parties in this country. . . ."

"I know, and if your bread is dependent upon writing politics, you have to belong to one camp or the other."

"Most noble fellow," said Iris mockingly. "False even in his work. And if your ideals are false, how do you suppose the man can be true?"

"I don't."

"Then you admit you are false?"

"Sometimes, yes. I have to be. We all have to be. Otherwise—well, you know, no man can do, or say, absolutely what he likes."

"Better write novels then," said Sir Henry.

"No. They are mostly even less true to life. We have a Censor in England. Art is governed by Law in this island, and control is the negation of creative effort. You spoke of possession just now. But in England people won't allow an artist to have a soul. A man who wrote a true biography, a true play or book on life would be labelled a blackguard by Society, which itself moves and lives in a permanent atmosphere of overt and covert blackguardism. Only music is free as artistic expression. But soon Strauss will get found out, and when he does, no doubt the Lord Chamberlain will have the horns and the oboes eliminated from the orchestra. Strindberg, now, wrote truthfully, so

far as he could know the truth, and most men think he was mad."

"Or an ass," said Sir Henry. "I've read *A Fool's Confession.*"

"Or a weakling," said Iris, "to be so upset by women."

"Or a giant," I returned, "because he was strong enough to face things."

"But you haven't answered us, you know," said Iris. "You admit you are false to your work. What, then, are you true in?"

Sir Henry chortled, "In love, of course."

"I wouldn't even dare say that," I replied meekly.

"I should think you wouldn't," said Iris. "Do you even know what love is?"

"It's a madness, I believe."

"Or an illusion. You see, you haven't even the courage to be a lover, so that in work and love, the two great occupations of mankind, you admit you are not true to yourself."

"I'm as true as I dare be."

"A Napoleonic speech! Qualified truth, the old story, the old compromise. Do you know, I think we civilised folk are growing more and more degenerate! No man to-day dares to be himself, and women are ceasing to be women. Our public life is becoming more and more hypocritical, as men grow more and more self-seeking. And . . ."

"But individualism, you must not forget that. Individualism is the life-blood of art, of creators. England has still that."

"I know. It is our greatness, our hope. But in the growing conditions of Society and the State, only rich men can afford to be individuals, and they, generally, can't be. The more we get on, the harder it becomes to be anything, to risk anything. Why don't I keep my babes by me at home; educate my little son, nurse my own baby, live with it, be a real mother to it? Why? I'll tell you truthfully. Because I'm such a poor woman, I can't breast-feed my child. Because I've no time. Because it isn't the thing. Because I'm not strong enough to renounce, not true enough to understand. And yet I do understand. I spend my life frivolling, reading nothing, doing nothing; moving from one boring society rattle to another, snatching glimpses of my children, passing a vain existence, as all my other

friends do, as most of us do except you artist people who seem afraid to do anything."

"Afraid?"

"Yes, afraid. The best of you cannot even make money, because there is no cohesion among you, because you are jealous, unorganised, systemless, vain, as women are. But even the women are organising now. No fight is won without generalship, discipline, *esprit de corps*. You writers, for instance, could break down the Censorship in a month if you united, if you formed a Trade Union to raise the public taste, to insist on the rights of artistic expression; if every Jack and Jill writer of you formed a publishing society to print your own books, and a theatre society to produce your own plays. Yes, leave the commercial stage alone. Boycott it—it and all the other trade agents and middle-men who direct and exploit you. Do what the railwaymen have done for Knox. Strike! Set up your own standards, sell your own wares, band together, Press and literature, as one man, and see what the captains of industry can do to you then. But you won't. Your individualism runs away with you, plays you false. Your super-men get broken on the wheel of life. Your business methods are puerile, and yet even I know that if I don't control my butcher's bill he will control me. You think you are all very fine people, I know. I don't. I think you are absurd. You remind me of the girl who runs off with her dearest friend's *fiancé*. There is no class loyalty in you, no organisation, no principle. Bah!"

"My dear! Really, my dear!" said Sir Henry, glancing at me.

"Oh, we're talking now," Iris retorted. "Isn't it quite true, much truer, for example, than what we read in the books from the libraries? You all talk about art, but what do any of you do to make us understand art, to knock down the trammels that beset a trade that you know can only prosper in freedom?"

"There's something in that, I admit."

"There's more than something. What you artists never get hold of is life. You don't seem to see that in a material, commercial world, art must be treated just as merchandise is, if it is to sell and to remain a saleable commodity. Antique furniture dealers have found that out long ago.

The Ring of the Auction Rooms is just as much an institution as the Gaiety. It's run designedly to run the public, and works admirably. Art is almost the only thing on the market that is not organised and syndicated. And it is not, simply because of the cant talked about individualism, which in practice is the chaos of envy. It is bad and stupid. It leads to false estimates and values, what is called the popular novel, rotten plays, Royal Academy picture shows, ludicrous over-production, inflated prices here, generally due to commercial organisation, poverty there when the real artist works for himself alone. And all the while articles appear about Art for Art's sake, when you all know that in modern economic conditions Art is becoming ever increasingly commercialised, and so impoverished and perishable."

"My dear lady, what you say is true enough, but you admit that you are equally false. It's not only artists who fail."

"Oh, yes. But then, I have nothing to give the world, whereas every true artist has a message. I know five of perhaps the best writers in England, and their joint annual earnings would not pay my yearly household bills. Once I asked them all to dine, and tried—oh, ever so hard—to get them to unite and form a Writers' Union; but they all disagreed so fiercely that when they were all gone, Henry said: 'For Heaven's sake, dear, don't let us have any more dinners of "literary gents."' They seemed to me suspicious of one another. One man said, 'Art is not coal.' Another said, 'Art is martyrdom.' A third said he was 'not taking any'—though he took an awful lot of my husband's port. The fourth was very fat and very supercilious. And I think the fifth growled at everybody, set them all by the ears, and me too, for he had a voice like a thunder-clap. However, I did my best. I even offered to provide a secretary and pay office rent for a year. But no, these splendid but wholly necessitous gentlemen treated my proposal with derision, although I explained to them carefully that such was the way old masters and paintings were sold, and that those responsible took good care to establish standards set prices, and hold the Ring."

"Magnificent folly, yes!"

"You admit it! But what is the result? Puny politicians

and sleek lawyers are the men who count in England. My women friends chat to me about emancipation and George's latest crime, rarely indeed about this book or that writer, unless it happens to be a popular novel, which they read because it is the fashion. And it is so because you people are not organised, are in fact wildly self-destructive units clogging and trampling upon one another. There is hardly any real criticism to-day, because nobody wants it, and the insides of the business are commercial. As commerce infects art, so art will deteriorate. Soon it will get entirely commercialised, and when it does, why then all you really literary gentlemen had better take to another job or, like the sons of the Peers, go out to America for a matrimonial deal."

"But American heiresses wouldn't have us," I exclaimed.

"Nonsense. There you are again, false to yourself. My experience of artists is that they are particularly attractive to women, no doubt because of their vitality and originality and because of the woman that most of them have in their composition. After all, what do you men really seek in us—a woman? Well, we seek in you a man. Look at me! Money, I have it in plenty, also a charming husband, only I rarely see him. And what do I get out of my wealth? Happiness? Affection? Sympathy? Enough for ordinary decency, oh, yes. Yet not a particle of the happiness the humblest artist derives from his own work. We are too busy for affection, and sympathy is not a modern virtue. I live, to be sure. I gad about. I know lots of people. But I haven't even the nous to choose my own frocks. If Paquin or some tradesman with a reputation tells me I am suited, I buy, I pay, I wear, and then some quite unknown artist frankly tells me one day at a party that green is not my colour at all, and I get angry and buy another.

"Partly, that is why we women are revolting. The sham is beginning to sicken us. Some of us do want some truth, some self-respect, though, personally, I doubt whether woman is constitutionally capable of grasping the truth. But men are becoming less and less capable of grasping it. And yet it is the only thing we have, men or women. Our souls, ourselves—that is all. The rest is not ours any

more than our children are, or my silk stockings which my maid wears, as I know, on her days out. Why, at this moment James is probably smoking Henry's cigars. Believe me, the only people who possess anything are those who have something to create, as the secret of love is giving. The richest man in the world would go mad in a year if he had no one to share his pleasures with."

"Gad!" interposed Sir Henry. "You're right, Iris. But do you know you've only twelve minutes to get dressed. Hadn't . . . ?"

"We'll be late then. Never mind. Have I convinced you?" and Iris turned gracefully towards me.

"Almost. What is mine is yours. You ought to be in the House."

"I ought to be with my babies," Iris answered gravely. "You see, we never have what is ours."

"*Carajo!*" I said. "I believe I've come down without enough money to tip your butler."

Iris rose and walked demurely to the door.

"He'll understand," she said softly. "I'll tell him you're only a writer."

Play of the Month

The Eldest Son

THE *jejeune* controversialists who have been bewailing lately the "gloominess" of our young writers cannot do better than pay a visit to John Galsworthy's *The Eldest Son*, where they will find the laws of primogeniture, class tradition and snobbery, with all the other principles that govern the country gentry, set forth as truthfully and objectively as they could desire; and the jollity of it all as well. In this play of manners Mr. Galsworthy realises himself. His own views remain concealed; there is no moral, there is no unkindness; if the setting is technically that of a Pinero satire, it is quite unstagey and self-explanatory, and the story is taking place daily all over the country, a very old story which, as Heine said, is always new.

Hindle Wakes in a higher sphere, though utterly different in characterisation, so much so that the two plays together form a valuable criticism of English custom. Here, again, it is the girl who sees the truer of the parties, who finally refuses to bind herself to the stake of convention, even if she has to face the world as what is called a "dishonoured woman." Signs of the times! It is the breakdown of the old adage—"Make an honest woman of her." The weakness of this Socialistic theory lies in the class principle which inspires it, whereas class principles are the very things Social Democracy would demolish. A truly Socialist gamekeeper's daughter, an she cared for her "eldest son," would not fear any class differentiation: she would take a gentleman for her man, just as some kings take beggar maidens to their throne, and the rest would be in part with the social evolution. And that is the play that has to be written, if women are to step out in life as irresponsible as men. The thing will be to see the eldest son mated with the gamekeeper's daughter, to see the factory girl married to young Wakes, and, as the interest

will really begin there, so there, with the ring on the girl's finger, the coming play will begin.

In Strindberg's *Miss Juliet*, the girl aristocrat kills herself because she cannot face her class with "dishonour," whereas the man, who is of the people, passes on and upwards and probably ends as the proprietor of a big hotel in Switzerland. And it is the decadence of the hitherto ruling classes that Strindberg, Galsworthy, and Stanley Houghton have depicted in their several works; the inability of class to accept disenfranchisement, to shake off the trammels of convention, to face and accept the coming new order of things. Mr. Galsworthy's eldest son is typical—a brainless rotter, a creature of stock ideas which belong to his class and which bind him and all his kind to the soil. All his family, all his set think alike. They know all about dogs and horses, act on fixed principles of riding straight and keeping up the tradition, so that the moment anything occurs outside their pale, they have only wooden theories to confront it.

And they fail, as they are failing in the new England. It is not exactly their fault. The public-school system is largely to blame. Especially the womenfolk are to blame, these country girls who ape men's sporting activities and see little else in life. Mr. Galsworthy has drawn these people with a sure hand. They play the game according to their lights, and little more. Only the son has certain blurred notions of honour which, in our conditions of civilisation, are a weakness. He will go to Canada. He will stick to the girl. He won't funk his "fences."

After all, why should he? He admits he has no other qualifications, talents or capacities. Why shouldn't he go to Canada? (A little late this, by the way, for many of the aristocracy are going to Canada.) Why all this fuss? The eldest son who goes to America and returns with a wealthy pork-packer's daughter is not discredited. Why should he, if he goes out to work with a poor English girl? Ah, what a difference money makes!

The Eldest Son is a cheery play, once we accept the theatre as a place of enlightenment as well as of entertainment. The gamekeeper's daughter does the "right thing by the man"—she releases him. What more can the landed gentry want? The boy will

be careful after his experience. He will settle down, no doubt with the Irish girl who tried so hard to catch him, and "Dad" will give him a couple of thousands a year, and then he will stand for Parliament. All's well that ends well. One can laugh at this play, no need to giggle at artificial absurdities. All the time one is interested. The deeper emotions are not touched, because we English don't believe in misalliances. No, there is no gloom here. The whole thing is admirable. It is absolutely, with *Hindle Wakes*, the play of 1912.

S. O.

Books of the Month

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

LETTERS *and* SKETCHES FROM THE HOUSE OF COMMONS. By the late RT. HON. SIR RICHARD TEMPLE, Bt., M.P. Edited by his son, Sir Richard Carnac Temple. Murray. 10*s.* 6*d.* net.

Day after day, during a Parliamentary career from 1886 to 1895, Sir Richard Temple jotted down, evidently not without care, his impressions of the day's procedure in Parliament. From time to time he added sketches of more or less prominent politicians of the day. If Sir Richard had been Parliamentary representative of a modern newspaper he could hardly have been more diligent in his writing, and his would have been a very notable contribution to journalism. As an historical journal it is of exceptional value, for the narrative here given is continuous for the years 1886–87. He is entirely a partisan, but a very observant partisan, with a shrewd eye for character and a gift of concise summary. He thoroughly dislikes those who can be included among "pestilent English members, Scotch Radicals, and treasonous Irish." He speaks without hostility of such young men as John Burns and Lloyd George; detests Gladstone; praises Bradlaugh; notes the "cultured speaking" of Curzon, and "the impression of effective Parliamentary power" left by Mr. Asquith. He gives perhaps the best criticism of Mr. Balfour which has ever been made when he writes:—"I do not call to mind his speaking at any length upon any purely Imperial affair, except in so far as it might affect some party issue, nor upon any financial subject, except bimetallism."

MY LIFE IN PRISON. By DONALD LOWRIE. Lane. 6*s.* net.

The author has perhaps been led to take Dostoievski as his model in presenting a psychological as well as an externally realistic account of his prison experience. His work has no considerable artistic value, for it is disjointed and formless. But as a record it is of unusual interest and value, the more so in that Mr. Lowrie endeavours to be detached in his criticism, and to give such credit to the prison system as it deserves. He himself was seduced into crime by the pressure of starvation, and his first burglary brought upon him a sentence of fifteen years. The conditions he describes are those of an American prison, which seem to be worse than those existing in England. The regimen could clearly have no other effect than to brutalise victims, and the prospect of a discharged prisoner are best revealed in the words of a prison acquaintance of the author: "I had to commit four burglaries before I got my head above water." The psychology is a little too ambitious to be entirely reliable, but the pen-portraits of the men with whom he passed his time in the prison yard or the dining-room are evidently authentic. It is a book of vivid narrative and description, which demands attention.

THOMAS HARDY: A CRITICAL STUDY. By Lascelles Abercrombie. Secker. 7*s.* 6*d.* net.

Mr. Abercrombie's study of Thomas Hardy is instructive criticism of a kind that is very rare. He has the philosophical faculty for framing a theory of art, the analytical capacity to examine his author and see how

far he conforms to that theory, and the appreciative instinct to discern the finer points to which a consideration of Hardy's fiction and poetry lends itself. To some extent, perhaps, it would be true to say that the study of Hardy, coupled with a study of the Greek dramatists to whose type Hardy, broadly speaking, conforms, has afforded Mr. Abercrombie the models upon which he has based his theory of fine art. And to this extent it is Hardy who has made his theory, rather than his theory that has been satisfied by Hardy; and the other novelists have in consequence suffered when confronted with a standard which they would never have been willing to acknowledge.

At any rate, we may agree with Mr. Abercrombie that an artist gains by having a metaphysic which is the philosophical basis underlying his artistic structure, and that all the most significant work of Thomas Hardy is impregnated with his conception of the universal scheme. The author speaks justly of that "obvious quality" in Hardy's tragedy which is "an invasion into human consciousness of the general tragedy of existence, which thereby puts itself forth in living symbols"; and he regards this tragic fate as not "a sort of sinister interference" in the affairs of men, but a "condition of activity," a "state of affairs" which is "especially unfortunate for consciously sensitive human creatures who have the additional ill-luck to be firmly persuaded that their desires must have some creative value, some power of modifying the worldly process." And he observes further—and here we entirely agree with him—that there can be no human tragedy unless there is some magnificence of human resistance against fate. Nor will there be tragedy unless the heroes or heroines themselves, by their own acts, by some forgiveable weakness, contribute to their own undoing; so that coincidence—which in our opinion does play too large a part in Hardy's novels—is only one agency in that "ruthless stream of tendency," in and around the characters, "which the characters must in the end obey."

Mr. Abercrombie analyses with fine skill the artistic fitness and nicety with which Hardy moulds his novels to express his central conception, marshalling the affair of an individual, or a group of individuals, in their relation to the tragic scheme, so that nothing shall seduce interest, nothing be out of the plan. The part that nature plays in his novels is an integral part of the scheme. Woods and fields and skies are not mere setting; they belong to the actual life in which the persons whom Hardy has chosen participate. The chorus of rustics plays a similar part. "We laugh at these country folks' expressions, sometimes chiefly because it is so evidently laborious to them to express themselves at all." They are only a little more articulate than Marty South's young saplings in *The Woodlanders*. The main characters, by reason of some added self-consciousness or sensitiveness, walk in solitude, or in solitary groups, across the stage. Mr. Abercrombie speaks of the "dramatic form" of those novels, like *The Return of the Native* or *The Woodlanders*, or *Far from the Madding Crowd*, in which the tragedy involves a group of persons, generally four, whose fates are interdependent; and of the "epic form" of novels such as *Tess* and *Jude*, in which separate indivduals are cheated of their desire, or from high ambition are dragged into the mire. His appreciation of *Tess* is probably the finest thing in the book. "It is decidedly uncommon," he remarks, "in a work of art, such intense and personal regard on the part of the author for his own creation." He observes "the dualism of a merciless, unhesitating, tragic imagination, and an impotent fervour of charity for its central figure; charity that seems always desiring to protect this figure from the steady, injurious process of the imagination which conceived her, yet can do nothing but painfully watch her destruction."

Space forbids discussion of Mr. Abercrombie's chapter on *The Dynasts*, in which Hardy's philosophy takes a yet more explicit form. We conclude by insisting that no admirer of the great novelist and no student of fiction as an art should omit to read this in every way exceptional book.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BYRON. By ETHEL COLBURN MAYNE. With 18 illustrations. London: Methuen. 2 vols. 21*s.* net.

No one could have expected much from an illustrated book on Byron in an age when he might seem to command two volumes chiefly as a competitor with du Barry for public curiosity. Miss Mayne's book, therefore, is an agreeable surprise. It is ample, careful, and highly intelligent. In fact, there is hardly any other single book which tells so much. That also is its one important weakness. Miss Mayne has been so anxious to exclude nothing of the truth that her work is altogether lacking in clear and decisive outlines. The admission of a myriad variety of details has had the effect of attaching her to each one in turn rather than to the whole. Hence at times a measure of pettiness in her criticism which would not have been noticeable were it less isolated. Nevertheless, the book is very far from being a mere accumulation of disconnected material from published sources. The material is indeed so large and various and well selected that even if it had not been well arranged it would make a respectable book. But Miss Mayne is thoroughly alive. She is never encumbered by quotations and paraphrases, and most of her chapters can be read straight through with comfort as well as interest. She is not afraid of anything, and does not combine squeamishness with her good taste. On the question of Byron and Augusta Leigh she dissipates any doubts concerning the thesis of "Astarte" which may have been roused by Mr. Edgecumbe's *Byron: The Last Phase*. Perhaps there is a suspicion of exulting shrillness in the tone of some of her personal criticisms —but only a suspicion—and a shade of over-satisfaction at being able to take us behind the scenes, with the help of the letters and journals, to "watch, with attention and admiring amusement, the 'make-up' of the Byronic hero," to show us the six eagles of Delphi growing into twelve in the course of years. But on the whole the tone is ripe and well considered, and reaches a high level in many passages of description, narration, and reflection. No book so fair and so many-sided has an equal chance of reaching popularity. We may repeat her words: "We cannot change the play on the boards—and as he, watching it himself, might have exclaimed: 'By the gods, it is a fine entertainment!'"

HISTORY OF ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY. By A. W. BENN. Watts and Co. 1*s.*

A brave task, indeed, to essay in the short measure of 150 pages. The book is, of course, a primer, and Mr. Benn starts by emphasising the distinction which mankind has always thrust upon philosophers as compared with those whose aim lies in science, art, or politics. While the aim of all other learned men is knowledge, the aim of the philosopher is wisdom—a bigger and better thing.

This little book is an introduction to a great school of thought, and justifies the words of Sir Henry Maine: "Except the blind forces of Nature, nothing moves in this world which is not Greek in its origin."

WILLIAM MORRIS: A critical study. By JOHN DRINKWATER. London: Secker. 7*s.* 6*d.* net.

MR. JOHN DRINKWATER, himself a poet, has written a charming book about William Morris. It is charming because it is written with much sweetness and labour of style, with much enthusiasm for rare and admirable things, and because, by the way, it says much that is true or pleasant about many points of art and life as seen by a gifted and loving nature. In fact, it is better for what it tells us of Mr. Drinkwater than for what it tells of Morris. If it told still more of him and still less of Morris, it would have been even better. Not that it is by any means an egoistic essay for which Morris provides only the excuse. No; Morris's books of prose and verse, even to *John Ball*, are mentioned one by one. Moreover, he says at times very true things which might well have been elaborated, as, for example, when he says that earth and the people of earth were "sacred things" to Morris, that "his one overmastering

passion was for a world wherein men and women lived in full responsiveness to the beauty of the earth, labouring with their hands and adventurous and capricious in spirit, finding joy in their work and in contact with each other, and rejecting all the things of civilisation that were dulling and mechanical." Such a lover of poetry as Mr. Drinkwater is worth consulting also on other points in the book. But the book is too loyal to Morris to do justice to Mr. Drinkwater, while the vision of Morris is too fitful and unripe to be satisfactory, or even in the main suggestive. Words come too easily to Mr. Drinkwater, and those words are too often abstract and merely dignified. We do not mean that it would have been better for rewriting. We have no doubt that it was carefully written. The thought was not in a condition ripe for words. It has been forced into inadequate—but always sweet and dignified—words, which tell us less than they seem to, however vague and uncertain; at least, we do not feel that this beautiful and ineffectual mist tells us either what the author thinks or what he desires to convey, if we may make such a distinction. Nevertheless, it is highly probable that the ideas are in a state from which they may be much farther developed by readers possessed with the spiritual enthusiasm so likely to be inspired by Mr. Drinkwater.

CRITICAL

THE NEW SPIRIT IN DRAMA AND ART. By HUNTLY CARTER. Frank Palmer. 12*s.* 6*d.*

With much taste and much learning has Mr. Huntly Carter traced the strivings of that new spirit which seeks liberty of expression in Drama and Art. The subject is classified geographically; thus we read of the New Spirit in London, Paris, Cracow, Moscow, and other centres, and this method, strange as it may appear at first, is thoroughly justifiable, for we are thus brought face to face with those local shades of artistic aspiration which would have been submerged in a survey of the subject on general grounds. Altogether, a handsome and interesting volume, up to date as regards information, just in its appreciations, and admirably illustrated.

THE LOVE-SEEKER. By MAUD CHERTON BRABY. Jenkins.

Women are "discovering" many things these days, perhaps the most engrossing discovery being the difficulty of married life, though if it is true that women instinctively know all about men, we, who know "nothing" about women, may be pardoned for our dulness in not understanding the pother. In the work of enlightenment and counsel Mrs. Braby has found a vocation, almost a mission. She has a suave, a bedside style; plainly she knows a good deal about it, and, what is more, she has contrived in this handbook to married life to give some useful hints and admonitions which to those about to marry we recommend. The trouble is that man is an animal, woman an emotionalist. Mate them, and at once each discovers faults, failings, tendencies, feelings in the other that if not properly adjusted may lead to trouble. All this is topical enough, to be sure. Mrs. Braby courageously eschews sentiment. She recognises the physiological facts of humanity. If we are to go to school to learn how to love, then why not have a course in her hands? There are many who, an they would digest this manual, might profit and prosper accordingly.

ECONOMIC

THE THEORY OF DISTRIBUTION AND CONSUMPTION. By T. LLOYD. Nisbet and Co., 1911.

On the whole a good book, though of the haggis type—full of fine but confused feeding. The articles of which it is composed will have been

read—one at a time—with interest and profit, though hardly with complete agreement, by the readers of *The Statist*. Bound together in a volume of 500 pages, they are rather hard reading, even after making allowance for Mr. Lloyd's frank apology for their looseness of texture. This is all the more to be regretted as they contain much useful information and some effective argument against neo-Protectionism, together with suggestive speculation on such urgent problems as education, the land question, imperial federation, conservation of natural resources, destitution, &c., and a cornucopia teeming with the most various counsel for all sections of the Empire. The central thesis of the predominant part played by consumption and distribution in the smooth working of the economic machine, and the urgent necessity of raising the standard of living of the masses, thereby increasing the purchasing power of our own people, tends to get lost in innumerable digressions, which, though valuable in themselves, obscure the argument. Had it been possible for Mr. Lloyd to work out his criticism of the orthodox economists who have—in his opinion—given undue predominance to production to the neglect of its primary motive, consumption, his readers would better appreciate the force of his illustrations. But even as it is the book cannot fail to stimulate thought.

ESSAYS AND GENERAL LITERATURE

MARRIAGE IN CHURCH AND STATE. By the REV. T. A. LACEY, M.A. Robert Scott. 5*s*. net.

This is an able, sincere, and painstaking treatment of the marriage question from the Anglo-Catholic point of view—the kind of book which we imagine will be read and taken *au plus grand sérieux* in numerous High Church vicarages, and altogether ignored by 99 per cent. of the public, who are well assured that "men (and women) are more than institutions," and not in the least impressed by the most learned disquisitions on Canon Law. If an ecclesiastical body will persist in branding as "incestuous," say, a marriage with a deceased wife's sister—a proceeding which Mr. Lacey calls "perfectly just"—all we can say is, so much the worse for that ecclesiastical body; if that same body will take up an impossibilist attitude towards the cry for the long overdue reform of our marriage laws, then humanity will dispense with its sanctions, and let such a Church go its own mediæval way. As we read Mr. Lacey's treatise, with its all-pervasive Latin jargon about *separatio corporum, matrimonium conscientiae, in facie ecclesiae, disparitas cultus*, &c., &c., we realise anew how correctly Bishop Diggle, of Carlisle, diagnosed the situation a few years ago, when he spoke of "the rapidly-widening gulf that is fixing itself between the English Church and the English people," and solemnly warned modern Anglicanism that it was becoming "a mere sect." Such a sect may, of course, with perfect propriety legislate for those who voluntarily submit to its ruling; but it must abate its pretensions to impose its antiquated standards either upon the State or upon a world which—whether ecclesiastics like it or not—has definitely emerged from the Middle Ages.

THE NOTE-BOOKS OF SAMUEL BUTLER. Selections arranged and edited by HENRY FESTING JONES. A. C. Fifield. 6*s*. net.

Like Hamlet and Captain Cuttle, the author of *Erewhon* had great faith in the advisability of "making a note of it." Early in life, he started to jot down observations and reflections, as they occurred to him, and, when he died, he left a legacy of five fat bound volumes of note, with contents carefully dated and indexed, and enough loose, unclassified material to fill another volume of equal size. Much of the matter thus accumulated he, himself, incorporated in the body of his published work; but a rich harvest has remained ungarnered, and to his friend, Mr. Festing Jones, has fallen the arduous, but delightful, labour of gleaning. He has gathered together in the present volume a generous selection of the more

significant notes, and, in doing so, has produced a priceless book of wit and wisdom; but a book which it is impossible to epitomise within the scope of a short review. We could only give an indication of its range and infinite variety by reprinting the whole of the thirty-nine pages of index; and even the most liberal quotation would hardly convey any adequate sense of its gay wisdom and pregnant wit. Luckily, it is scarcely necessary at this time of day for a reviewer to lay stress on the unique quality of Samuel Butler's writing. His trenchant and incisive pen has pierced the indifference of the most hidebound. He is no longer considered "a Galileo of Mares' nests," a crank, a tilter at windmills. His time has come, as he predicted, for he was confident of the verdict of posterity. Again and again, in the course of these notes, he pronounces his certitude of posthumous fame, though he seems rather to wish that he might be there to mock his admirers! Indeed, he has written a Whitmanesque poem by way of warning to his unborn adulators:—

"O Critics, cultured Critics!
Who will praise me after I am dead,
Who will see in me both more and less than I intended,
But will swear that whatever it was it was all perfectly right:
You will think you are better than the people who, when I was alive, swore that whatever I did was wrong,
And damned my books for me as fast as I could write them;
But you will not be better, you will be just the same, neither better nor worse,
And you will go for some future Butler as your fathers have gone for me.
Oh! how I should have hated you!"

He then goes on to express his appreciation of the "Nice People" who will refuse to have him thrust down their throats by the Cultured Critics. So, what is the poor reviewer to do! We like this book more than we can say. Yet, if we so much as attempt to express our enthusiasm, the Nice People will shrug their shoulders, and the shade of Samuel Butler will chuckle at our discomfiture. We might have avoided the dilemma by out-and-out abuse; but it is too late to begin now. And at all events we have had the entertainment, which the Nice People may take or leave, as they choose. We care nothing that we incur the hate of the Shade, so long as we may enjoy the substance of Samuel Butler!

A Wiltshire Village. By Alfred Williams. Duckworth. 5s. net.

The value of this book lies in its being written by a cottager. Those who know anything about the English rustic born in the labourer's cottage know how rare a thing it is to get any expression of village life from him as he sees it. That is why we welcome Mr. Williams' book. The author is a poet, it is true, but he earns his daily bread as a hammerman, and he followed the plough at the age of eight, whilst his mother gleaned in the fields. His school education ceased at eleven. Valuable as is this record of village life as seen through a workman's eyes, it bears the defect of the lack of absolute candour. This is not to be wondered at, since Mr. Williams has written of his own village, South Marston, and portrayed his neighbours, who are mentioned by name. We feel he does not tell us the whole truth about the farmers, and we sometimes wish that Mr. Williams had never learnt his Horace. We would gladly sacrifice many a Latin tag for a bit of real Wiltshire, such as "'Ya owld devil,' she screamed, 'I 'awp I shall meet tha in hell!'" He might have written a classic of rural England had he devoted the time he spent in struggling through Horace, Pindar, and Euripides to the study of Arthur Young, William Cobbett, and Richard Jefferries. With great candour he tells us that he only heard of Richard Jefferries quite recently, in spite of having lived all his life in the centre of Richard Jefferries' country.

Mr. Williams depicts admirably that social side of work found in agricultural communities, but rarely experienced by town workers: "In the evenings, or week-ends, they worked in their gardens, or walked

out and viewed the cattle and crops, and praised so-and-so's drilling, or cutting, or hedging, or ditching, or visited each other's stables, and admired the horses or harness and cracked each other's whips." And he touches on the point we have often noticed, that the villager who rarely sees a newspaper gleans his knowledge of the outer world, even that of international politics, from the passing tramp! He contends that the condition of the agricultural labourer has improved but little. Rural depopulation, he says plainly, "is due to insufficiency of remuneration and of leisure; the hours are long and the money too small. . . . Improve their material position first . . . ; then if they want to be educated let them persevere with it." The writing is uneven, but occasionally we hear the beat of the hammerman poet behind the measured prose. "The sweat of the open fields is clean and sweet, yielded naturally," writes the author with personal feeling, "that of the other place, before the furnace, is wrung from your very heart and soul in anguish, leaving you faint, weary, powerless, and exhausted."

THE INSANITY OF PASSION AND CRIME. By L. FORBES WINSLOW, M.B., &c. John Ouseley. 10*s.* 6*d.* net.

THERE is this excuse—and it is a sound one—for the treatment of a serious professional subject in a somewhat popular manner, that the eyes of all who care to see are opened to very real perils that surround us. The chapters on heredity, on the mental collapse of children, on the "Tragedy of Women," should be read with grave attention, not only by parents but by all who have the welfare of humanity at heart. Yet there is something radically wrong with the author's outlook.

"The mind . . . is an enigma. Those who have deeply studied its phenomena, and who have regarded the scope with which it conceives and accomplishes, its intimacy with the Deity or the Demon, must admit this. The beauty with which its God has once endowed it; the depravity to which the wiles of Satan have reduced it. . . ."

Truly an odd pronouncement for a physician of the twentieth century. Acting on these lines, we shall soon revert to the Angekok's method of incantation for mental maladies, or to Gadarene-pig principles of cure. Who is this deity and who is this demon, and why do they interest themselves in our affairs?

LIFE OF MICHAEL ANGELO. By Romain Rolland. Translated by Frederic Lees. Illustrated. Heinemann. 6*s.* net.

M. Rolland certainly pays himself a tribute in his interest in the giants of the earth. Nor is he only content with Olympian power. Nothing less than Titanic might satisfies his sense of the things that should be. His little booklet on Beethoven is a small masterpiece in its way. The great "Jean Christophe" derives its inspiration from the same mighty musician. And the same note marks this book of his on "Michael Angelo," which Mr. Frederic Lees has capably translated. It is the tempests that trail through Michael Angelo's soul that win M. Rolland's regard. Unduly he underscores just these elements in the make-up of his soul, even to the disregarding of the more equable balance that probably better expresses the whole. The reverse of just this element, too, is prominently noted by him. When, faced by Malatesta's hatred, he fled to Venice, intending to proceed to France, Malatesta is almost lightly mentioned in order that Michael Angelo's flight should appear the more precipitate. "He was frightened and mortally ashamed of his fear," we are told. "He despised himself to such an extent that he fell ill. He wished to die, and it was believed that he was going to do so."

In all this, to be sure, M. Rolland is not so much inaccurate as guilty of more deeply indenting certain lines in the picture. And the reason for this is just his desire for a strong and violent zest in life. It is beside the point to say that he is sometimes turgid in proclaiming this; for that is only the effect in English of his eager outcries in the original. But more than the colour of unnecessary declamation, of unfair distortion,

is evident throughout the book; and this spoils it as a fair biography of the man. Moreover, it gives a touch of patronism to pages of the book that is not happy. It is not at all necessary, as it is decidedly ridiculous, to turn about and pity all those "whose throats know the acrid and intoxicating odour of Christian pessimism" because Michael Angelo chose some Christian as well as Pagan subjects for his Art. It suggests an ulterior note somewhat too strongly.

But that is only another way of saying that he has written a strongly individual book.

WHITMAN'S PRINT-COLLECTOR'S HANDBOOK. Sixth edition, revised and enlarged, with additional chapters by MALCOLM C. SALAMAN. G. Bell and Sons. 10*s.* 6*d.* net.

They who are familiar with the admirable handbook of the late Alfred Whitman will be glad to see it in this new garb. It is much more than a revised edition of that popular work, consisting, as it does, of fresh chapters on various subjects, with judicious enlargements and modifications of those already familiar to us. Mr. Salaman is to be congratulated on an achievement that must rejoice the hearts of the ever-increasing army of print-collectors.

M. MAETERLINCK. HOURS OF GLADNESS. Translated by A. TEXEIRA DE MATTOS. Illustrated by E. J. Detmold. George Allen and Co. 21*s.*

Whoever desires a feast for the eye and mind will find it in these studies, done into excellent English by Mr. Texeira de Mattos. It is illustrated in most artistic fashion, and the titles of the chapters alone—Our City Gardens, Perfumes, News of Spring, the Wrath of the Bee, and so forth—contain a promise of that keen, spiritualised observation which have made the author's fame as a naturalist. *Hours of Gladness,* in truth.

ON NATURE'S TRAIL: A WONDER BOOK OF THE WILD. By F. ST. MARS. With introduction by Lieut.-Col. J. H. Patterson, D.S.O. Illustrated by Ernest Aris. London: Nisbet. 6*s.* net.

Mr. St. Mars is a writer about wild animals as living things in the same line of succession as Jefferies, and Messrs. Kipling, C. G. D. Roberts, Thompson Seton, Alfred W. Rees, and others. But he more deliberately aims at vividness and simplicity of effect than any of his predecessors. He is not content to tell a story or draw a picture to the best of his ability and love, leaving the rest to the gods, but from beginning to end he never allows the reader to forget what he is trying to do. We are not always certain that he feels the life in his birds and beasts, but we are never in doubt of his intention that we should feel it. His business is portraiture. He chooses for the most part fierce creatures at their best moments against the grandest background, and he casts upon them a fierce and continuous limelight. His style is a restless, nervous, mannered one, full of repetitions and emphasised emphasis. It is characteristic of him to open thus:—"Officially, on the Great Register of Classification of Species, he stood as *Corvus cornix.* Unofficially he was a hoodie crow, which is a grey crow, which is a Danish crow. In point of truth, he was a winged disaster, and a servant of the Evil One. At least, that is what people said." Such writing draws attention to itself; that is its object; it is thick with conscious and unconscious accent. It must be loud, it must never leave the reader free, but must hammer him senseless with violence, emphasis, repetition, surprise. He tells you that "the awful, drawn, tense silence which followed was just beginning to make the jay feel sick," that a fisher-marten was "lounging in the shallows with his hands in his pockets, so to speak," and that a certain eagle-owl "looked many kinds of a fiend—which he certainly was." This is Mr. St. Mars' medium. He does not write like Walter Pater, but he makes his effect. Of course, he himself is more important than his animals, since he will so insist on what we are to think of them. They are all in his style, all excessively fierce, wild, brave, and violent, and all looking as well as performing their part.

They are lurid caricatures, but they are alive. The book is a cinematograph show from faked films, if they had not been faked it would have been duller, but not more alive. We should guess that Mr. St. Mars has not been in Thibet and other native places for his heroes, but that he is a great reader with an intense affection for the wild and a feverishly vivid fancy. With all his shouting and screaming, he is an artist, whose best moments are better than those of any of his predecessors. He snapshots the wild and does not conceal his camera. In Mr. Aris he has an illustrator entirely obedient to his purposes.

THE EPISODES OF VATHEK. Translated by SIR FRANK T. MARZIALS. With an introduction by Lewis Melville. Stephen Swift. 21*s.*

Beckford's mechanism and point of view may be out of date, but whoever still relishes the glowing imagery of "Vathek" will be thankful to Mr. Melville for his discovery and publication of these *Episodes*. They are longer than "Vathek" itself, and had they been incorporated into its text as originally planned, even the Orient-loving reader of those days might have complained of an overdose. As it is, they are not a whit less attractive than that astonishing performance, and the translation by the late Sir Frank Marzials has preserved all their eerie and grotesque charm.

ENGLISH EPIC AND HEROIC POETRY. By W. MACNEILE DIXON, M.A. Dent. 5*s.* net.

"True epic is national poetry," says Professor Dixon; and "the epic-making people must find a hero worthy of it." As long as we confine our attention to the authentic epic, the heroic poem such as the "Iliad" or "Beowulf"—the poetic expression of the heroic ideal of a race still close to nature, though it has been long experienced in song—we have no difficulty in deciding what meaning we shall attach to the term "epic." The "Iliad," the "Odyssey," and "Beowulf" are not merely examples of epic poetry; they are what we mean by epic; and as the number of primitive heroic poems is limited, we can only add to epic literature by extending its range, by including the imitative epic of culture. Here, again, Virgil and Milton have been the exemplars; they set themselves to stand in the epic tradition, and if we continue to add to the literature of this class, so as to include Chaucer and Spenser, we must further alter the definition, thinning it down and destroying its specific meaning.

Professor Dixon, who began this book with a sufficiently definite statement of the requirements of authentic epic, and with the promise of naming the *type* to which even the imitative poem must conform, is in practice obliged to abandon his rules. In his chapter on "Epic and Romance," he states his definition, and surely it has become very broad! "Any narrative poetry, if it be sufficiently impressive, is epic."

For Professor Dixon the extension of meaning has this advantage—it enables him to discuss a great many English poets who might have fallen outside his subject. And he is a critic so vigorous and in many ways discriminating, so fearless in assessing the value of the greatest (the hardest of tasks!), and at the same time so free from the danger of triteness, that his book is deserving of the warmest welcome.

A BOY IN THE COUNTRY. By JOHN STEVENSON. Illustrated by W. ARTHUR FRY. Edwin Arnold. 5*s.* net.

THE publishers of this book have made a mistake by giving it the format of a novel, for it is nothing of the sort. On the contrary, it is one of those rare examples of personal impressionism which have for kin some of the most satisfying books in the language, such as Walter Pater's *The Child in the House*, Richard Jefferies' *Bevis*, and Mr. W. H. Hudson's *Little Boy Found*. Though not as profound as any of these, *A Boy in the Country* holds its own as a delightful piece of retrospective writing. Mr. John Stevenson writes with that insight into common things and mundane occurrences which we associate with another Stevenson. His

chapters on "Four Kinds of Solitude" and "A Consideration of Smells" get very near the sensations of a boy, and not so much the unique boy, as is often the case in such books. Mr. Stevenson reveals the average boy, his sensations, dreams, and fears, and in so doing achieves distinction. The scene of this intimate history is Ulster, and presumably the author is a native of that province of Ireland; but, whether or not, he is deeply imbued with its spirit, and his book affords an interesting subject of comparison between two literatures of modern Ireland: that of the Irish literary movement and the more recent Ulster literary awakening. Between, in short, the Celtic and the Teutonic, or Teuton-Norse of the mixed race of north-eastern Ireland. One passage from *A Boy in the Country* will convey our meaning. When Mr. Stevenson writes of ghosts and such-like mysterious things, as everyone who writes of the impressions of childhood must, he is careful to make us understand that he is under no superstitious illusions. "Weather-creaks of furniture, leaf-tappings on the window, insect-originated sounds, the moaning of a sick cow, the howling of a dog——," which presage disaster and death to children and simple folk, have sufficiently matter-of-fact origins for the author of this book, and probably most Ulster folk. Not so in other parts of Ireland, as readers of Mr. W. B. Yeats' *Celtic Twilight* will recollect. There is nothing that could be construed as archaic in *A Boy in the Country*: it is full of the significance of earth rather than of those intimations of astral things which the earlier modern Irish books have taught us to expect from their countrymen. For that we must thank Mr. Stevenson; he at least represents himself, as all good writers should, and by doing so he succeeds in revealing something of his people.

ARRESTED FUGITIVES. By SIR EDWARD RUSSELL. Nisbet and Co. 6*s.* net.

A happier title could hardly be conceived. For arresting these would-be fugitives from the files of newspapers we heartily thank the author. They indicate so faithfully the character and quality of the man, and in doing that, explain the great position Sir Edward Russell has so long held in English journalism. For Sir Edward has not merely been a power in his own north country, but an inspiration to every journalist who would preserve his early reverence for a profession demanding the noblest ideals and the most faithful and conscientious work.

Nearly fifty pages are required to reprint a pamphlet written as long ago as 1875, entitled "Irving as Hamlet." This was written within a week of his first appearance in the part, and enables us to get a fair idea of the contemporary influence of Irving upon a critical mind, before his great position as a Shakespearian actor had been secured. We should imagine that this pamphlet had a great deal to do with establishing it. It is comforting to reflect that so patient and conscientious an artist as Irving found thus early in his career so sincere a Shakespearian student and lover as Sir Edward Russell to publicly appraise his work. But all that the book contains is worth reading, for there is wisdom and sanity in every sentence. Some of the best things in the book are republished addresses upon such topics as "The Right Use of Sound Literature," "Politics at Bethlehem," "The Advantages of Disestablishment," "Open Communion," &c.

A splendidly lifelike portrait of Sir Edward Russell appears as a frontispiece, which adds greatly to the pleasure of possessing the book.

ECCE DEUS: STUDIES IN PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY. By WILLIAM BENJAMIN SMITH. Watts and Co. 6*s.* net.

UNDER this quasi-orthodox title the author—a professor, formerly of mathematics, now of philosophy, in Tulane University, Louisiana—sends forth a volume in which he further elaborates the thesis of an earlier book of his—viz., that Christianity did not originate in the person and teachings of a historical Jesus, but in a pre-Christian Jesus-cult of secret and

mysterious character, supposed to have been widely spread in Palestine between ca. 100 B.C. and 100 A.D. The baselessness of this theory has been exposed by competent scholars like Prof. von Soden, of Berlin, who gives it as his considered verdict that there is not the slightest evidence for the worship of a pre-Christian cult-hero of the name of Jesus; while Prof. Bacon, of Yale, summed up his impressions in the caustic remark, "With the Biblical researches of Prof. Smith we have familiarised ourselves minutely, and still have confidence in Prof. Smith's mathematics." These freak-theories come and go; fortunately, they need not be taken as seriously as they are propounded.

ÆSOP'S FABLES. With illustrations by Arthur Rackham. Heinemann.

A joyous Xmas gift this, to young and old, to those who read and those who cannot, and it seems all as new as ever, Mr. Fox playing the leading part as the fellow with the greatest wisdom. Rackham's illustrations are a delight—especially his symbolic trees and the coloured plates. But why should it have been thought necessary to "present" Æsop through Mr. Chesterton, who is as artificial as the rest of the book is natural, philosophic, and human?

PORTRAITS AND SKETCHES. By EDMUND GOSSE, C.B. (Heinemann.)

Mr. Gosse has once more made a valiant attempt to uphold biography which, as an art, has sunk in England to mere adulation and flunkeyism. His volume is not very deep; some of his "heros" were obviously only slightly known to him, but they *are* portraits and they *are* sketches, so that they give a real idea of the originals, who leave each their distinctive impression. By far the most important is Mr. Gosse's sketch of Swinburne, which sets the man before us, like a snapshot, in somewhat a fresh light too—the frail giant with his astonishing mind and body. This is an essay of literary value, perhaps the best thing that has been written about the man. The Victorians were not kind to Swinburne. To-day we have become more adult in our estimates and appreciations, and Mr. Gosse has done no inconsiderable service in blowing away the scoriæ set around the memory of our great poet. All the sketches are worth reading, and there is a charming eulogy of André Gide, and little aperçus of almost forgotten men, such as "Orion" Horne, Philip James Bailey, Creighton, and the author of *John Inglesant*. Mr. Gosse is certainly our modern Boswell, a universal Boswell. He has an evident delight in his mission, which is thus transferred to his readers. A charming and distinguished volume.

A CHRISTMAS GARLAND. Woven by MAX BEERBOHM. (Heinemann.)

The art of "taking off" is peculiar to this country, and it must be granted that we do it rather well. London owes many a happy hour to Cissie Loftus. Queenie Mars, singing Harry Lauder's song about the "purple heather," is a finer delight than the original, and now comes the "inimitable" Max with a literary take-off of our leading writers. With the pencil Max is apt to be a little unkind. But these literary "turns" are not caricature; they are genuine bits of stylistic imitation; seriously considered, the work, as it were, of a mimic studying the voice, inflections, articulation, and gesticulation of a "favourite" with a view to production in the well-known formula: "I will now give you an imitation of Mr. ——" And the result is that Max has almost earned Bernard Shaw's impulsive adjective. These things are good, very, very good; in some cases quite remarkably successful, both in matter and construction. A man (as Mr. Belloc would say) might go further, and say that some of them are better than their prototypes; certainly George Street has not written anything so salacious as "Christmas" in this volume. We get Chesterton "done to a turn"; Arnold Bennett as funny as "The Card," if not funnier; the cloistered unction of Mr. A. C. Benson, the slanginess of Kipling, the Teutonic double-noun propensity of Frank Harris, the Perkin-ism of Mr. G. H. Wells—all these character-

istic of their sources. Hewlett might even go to school for "For Hearts Askew"; as for George Moore—did he, or Æ. write it?—and now Mr. Edmund Gosse introduces us to Ibsen and Browning—"Hey diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle!" It is not an art—this aping business—it is an *esprit*, a fine talent, for all that. Here we find Max far more "inimitable" than in his own creative work, Zuleika Dobson, and he has more to say. It is even better said, which is strange, if not mysterious. More. It is alarming. If Max can imitate the great like this, to what heights would he mount if he imitated himself? What shall we others do, if Max takes to writing our books for us, and nets in all the profits? "O Max, leave us, we pray you, our daily bread."

FICTION

THE LOST WORLD. By ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE. Hodder and Stoughton. 6*s*.

A jovial and ingenious story about four just—or very nearly—men who went to a plateau in South America inhabited by creatures of the Early Jurassic age, pterodactyls, dinosaurs, ape-men, &c., &c. Sir Arthur is a master of this kind of extravaganza, handles his puppets with good-humoured enthusiasm, and knows how to impress without bewildering the casual reader with scientific details. It was a clever and prudent touch, putting the narrative into the mouth of a young journalist; but the first hundred pages might well have been condensed.

DILEMMAS. By ERNEST DOWSON. New edition. Elkin Matthews. 2*s*. 6*d*. net.

These sentimental little stories do not show us Dowson at anything like his best. In his poetry, moving in the charming but artificial conventions of a kind of literary Watteauism, he is often delightful, but in the rougher ways of prose fiction he is as out of his place as a timid elegant in a third-class railway carriage on a Bank Holiday. The five tales in the volume, slight and naïvely romantic as they are, have nevertheless all the outward finish and style that so deft an artist in words might be expected to give them. Their themes have a note in common—a sense of regret for old memories and broken dreams that has in it a certain self-satisfaction. Dowson's melancholy is of the kind that rather enjoys itself, and—delicate artist though he was—is often enough factitious. The first story tells of a misunderstanding between lovers; another of an old gentleman who brings up a "luminous-eyed" little girl who turns into a prima-donna; a third of a street-singer and a celebrated musician. All are a little unripe and immature—fair promises that, alas! the author was never allowed to redeem.

PALMERS GREEN. By STEWART CAVEN. Putnam's. 6*s*.

Though the author approaches us with a manner that is a little too hectoring and pedagogic, he has written a capital tale. Suburban prejudices and manners are drawn for us with a categoric throughness reminiscent of Mr. Wells in his best sociological manner, and Mr. Caven touches all his points of view with a luminous psychology. A little more sympathy, a little less brutality, and he would have written a very good book indeed.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF SYLVIA. By A. D. PICKERING. Murray. 6*s*.

The story of a young girl, unsophisticated and tender, with a careful account of her sentimental education. The treatment is light, and the characters develop themselves by incident rather than by psychological analysis. A pleasant tale, though rather lacking in robustness.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

MARY PECHELL. By MRS. BELLOC LOWNDES. Second edition. Methuen. 6*s*.

This is a modern story of Sussex, an excellent love-story, put together with the easy mastery of Mrs. Belloc Lowndes. The characters of Lady Susan, of Caryll and John Ryman, are firmly drawn, and the heroine, Mary Pechell, is a fine, convincing type of girl.

POETRY AND DRAMA

THE POETICAL WORKS OF GEORGE MEREDITH. With notes by G. N. Trevelyan. Constable. 7*s*. 6*d*. net.

Only the other day we were reading in his *Letters* that Meredith had himself to pay for the publication of his poetry to the end. And now that it is gathered together and presented in one volume, the ironical comment is furnished, for there can be no doubt that this edition will not only introduce him as a poet to a far wider public, but even begin a slow process whereby, we divine, the novelist will come in time to date and derive from the poet. Too much of it, indeed, is preoccupied with intellectual processes. Even when he is not preoccupied with the mere function of the brain he gives too marked a stress to a reasoning procedure. The poet's business is to recreate those high emotional moments from which, when they are rightly perceived, the intellect may formulate its wisdom. Meredith too much inverted the order. Yet, even with the inclusion of this, what power is in the volume! The early poems are not of very much account. That which comes early goes early. It is when we come to the "Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth" and to "A Reading of Earth" that we strike the man who has shaped himself for his poetic utterance: in spite of the gorgeous "Ode to the Spirit of Earth in Autumn," one of his most wonderful things, and "Modern Love," that endures, as it invites, repeated readings. Indeed, it is just this character that gives particular value to the volume. One comes back to it again and again, as one returns to difficult and profound music. And in the end it defies us as music defies us—which is to say that it is not wholly intellectual, for the intellectual, once understood, is at once exhausted, and if it is not readily understood it is flawed in that fact. It is so one reads, and re-reads, the difficult and grandly prophetic "Odes in Contribution to the Song of French History." There should be few shelves, where poetry is valued, unacquainted with this volume. D. F.

THE POEMS OF JOHN DONNE. Edited from the old editions and numerous MSS., with introductions and commentary by HERBERT J. C. GRIERSON. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 2 vols. 18*s*. net.

THE first of these two recent volumes is devoted to as pure a text of Donne's poetry as we are likely to get, with footnotes recording variations, even in punctuation, from both manuscripts and early editions. The manuscripts, now for the first time thoroughly used, enable Mr. Grierson to vindicate the text of 1633 (the first edition), and to prove that some of the poems existed in more than one version; and his citations show how copyists "understood and misunderstood" certain poems, but in some cases help us to amend the printed text, even of 1633. Thus, for example, as a note to this epigram:

> I am unable, yonder begger cries,
> To stand, or move; if he say true, hee *lies*—

we are informed where it is given the title of "A lame begger," where "A beggar," and where no title at all. Thus, in another poem we learn which editions say "my braine," and which "thy braine," and also that

Mr. Grierson's predecessor erroneously attributed the second and incorrect form to the first edition. The monument thus erected to Mr. Grierson's perspicacity and patience is likely to last as long as men demand complete editions of the poetry of Donne. The second volume, entirely occupied by introduction and commentary, shows that Mr. Grierson's learning and judgment equal his perspicacity and patience. He does not explain everything, for the volume is but four hundred pages long; but he condenses into this space perhaps as much as possible of the literary and biographical material which can illuminate this alluring fog. In particular, he is to be congratulated upon his use of Donne's sermons for more explicit parallels to difficult thoughts in his poetry. In these notes, too, he discusses matters connected with the text which are not decided or exhausted by citations of varying authorities. Furthermore, nearly a hundred pages of the introduction are given to a consideration of the text and canon of Donne's poems. Only the fifty pages on "The poetry of Donne" could have been omitted without damaging the book or lessening its utility. This essay is an excrescence. It is interesting, it is even important, but it is not in place. Its form and its remoteness from finality in any respect uncomfortably distinguish it from its environment, where all is brief, business-like, and, as far as possible, complete. Such an edition has no room for expression of the opinion that "beauty is not precisely the quality we should predicate" of "*Ille mi par esse deo videtur*" of Sappho and Catullus—followed by the statement that "Beauty is the quality of poetry which records an ideal passion recollected in tranquillity, rather than of poetry, either dramatic or lyric, which utters the very movement and moment of passion itself." One can only ask who can have told Mr. Grierson this. Then, again, he may be right in saying that Donne "sets over against the abstract idealism, the sharp dualism of the Middle Ages, a justification of love as a natural passion in the human heart, the meaning and end of which is marriage . . . a passion in which body and soul alike have their part, and of which there is no reason to repent." He may be right, but he is, for this place, too controversial in asserting that poems like Donne's *Elegies*, Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, and Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* "could only lead to penitent outcries." In short, this valuable section of the introduction should have been omitted or given seven years of reconsideration. Nothing then would seriously have impaired this excellent edition.

POETICAL WORKS BY ROBERT BRIDGES. Excluding the eight dramas. Oxford University Press. 2*s*. net.

We welcome the unique adventure of issuing the complete works of a living poet at a price which many are willing to pay for those of the dead. Perhaps only by such an insidious measure could more than a few score be persuaded to notice work so pure and so free from any kind of ostentation as Mr. Robert Bridges'. The dramas—except the two masques of *Demeter* and *Prometheus*—are omitted, but all the lyrics and narratives are given, including many that were not hitherto to be had in book form. The whole extends over nearly five hundred pages of excellent print. We recommend the work, both because it is exquisite in a rare kind, and because it is already important as an influence on the poetry of this generation.

POEMS OF JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL. Oxford University Press. 2*s*. net.

If Englishmen can read the poems of Lowell in double columns any talk of national decadence is absurd. The question is now to be decided by this edition, which fills over six hundred pages, half of them in double columns. Lowell wrote excellent plain English prose, and he truly loved poetry. His verses, therefore, command much curiosity. They are seldom idle, and they are nearly always compact, and always intelligible. All that they ever gain by the verse form is brevity and point, and that not always. But this cheap compendious edition is a necessary act of justice to a man,

already distinguished, who has not yet received his medal of immortality (whether the short or the long service medal). The single volume gives him a chance of penetrating to the utmost sources of fame.

A Legend of Old Persia, and other Poems. By A. B. S. Tennyson. Heinemann. 5s. net.

Mr. Tennyson's hundred and fifteen pages are extremely interesting. He can, if and when he wishes, write with a lucid and massive, but not uncommon, simplicity, as in "The Earth":

> The Earth and her travail are ancient,
> Her gods have but reigned for a while—
> The moon-crowned Queen Astarte,
> The barking god of the Nile.
> Her temples were raised and builded,
> And crumbled again to the dust—
> Her worships have been and vanished—
> But the heart of the Earth is just.

But only a small part of the book consists of such work. The greater part is experimental in thought, language, and metre, and is only at long intervals perfect in any kind. We cannot foresee whether Mr. Tennyson will attain to a balance of his peculiar powers. At present he has in almost equal measure aspiration, tenderness, humour, and playfulness, and they are not balanced; in fact, they produce feelings of giddiness and doubt, as well as of pleasure and admiration. Mr. Tennyson is true to his own temperament; he relies upon it, and seldom does anything merely imitative or contemporary. To succeed he must somehow combine his aspiration and his humour instead of allowing them to perform, as at present, in fascinating but unequal union. Should he effect this combination his style promises a high achievement of an exceptionally welcome kind, for it is limpid without being garrulous, and sweet and coloured, yet neither cloying nor slow—it has, in fact, a natural swiftness and grace.

Poems of Adam Lindsay Gordon. Edited, with introduction, notes, and appendices, by Frank Maldon Robb. Oxford University Press. 2s. net.

It is neither necessary nor possible to judge Lindsay Gordon by an absolute standard. We must not, and cannot, forget that he was (though not by birth) an Australian, and that he died, after a very adventurous life for a poet, at thirty-seven. Knowing these things, we are not put out by the imperfect mixture of Byron, Browning, and Swinburne which this fearless horseman made without overmuch trouble—as he says somewhere:

> I've got a stale subject to handle,
> A very stale stump of a pen.

The Colonial flavour is strong, as in—

> The fair one in fig leaves, who d—d us all
> For a bite at a golden pippin:

but Mr. Kipling has made us either used to it or in love with it. Moreover, we are strongly disposed to-day to make every allowance for a man who writes verse as if he could ride a horse. This eminently is what Gordon does. He is a tough, bold, chivalrous fellow, fond of drinking and swearing, and at once a cynic and sentimental. *Que voulez-vous?* He might have been poet laureate had he not died in 1870. The Australians have written home about him. Mr. Kipling has appeared since, yet it is possible to prefer Gordon for the *earliness* of his flavour, for the signs that he was born in a comparatively golden clime. He has also the merit of appealing to those who do not care for poetry, which is always reckoned the supreme merit.

POLITICS

THE ANGLO-GERMAN PROBLEM. By CHARLES SAROLEA. Nelson and Sons.

Another book on Anglo-German relations, moderate, sensible, correct, quite an exposition of the case to be read, even if Mr. Sarolea has not revealed anything that has not been said by Maxse, Garvin, Dr. Dillon, Blennerhasset, the Harrisons, the *Times*, the *Daily Mail*, and how many other writers, correspondents, and leader writers during the last decade. All the same, this is a thoroughly reliable statement of the problem, lucidly written, calmly expressed, and we recommend it. Only on one point would we disagree. Mr. Sarolea maintains that the real Achilles heel of the British Empire is the defence of Belgium and France, that the Navy is *not*, therefore, the paramount issue between England and Germany, as "England would have even more cause for anxiety" were Germany to abandon her shipbuilding race. Mr. Sarolea is a Belgian. We understand his case. But it is not quite essentially ours. To us, our naval supremacy is all. So much so, that were Germany to give up her naval aspirations, there is no reason whatever why we should not be friends with her—none. The interest of the *entente* is far more the interest of France. Our trouble with Germany is solely her naval ambition. And if only we would grasp that fact and start building at once eight capital ships a year, Germany would be forced to abandon her aims, which are the ultimate destruction of our naval supremacy.

THE DECLINE OF ARISTOCRACY. By ARTHUR PONSONBY, M.P. T. Fisher Unwin. 7*s.* 6*d.* net.

Poor old aristocracy! As if it had not enough trouble on hand in trying to hold back the oncoming hosts of modern democracy, Mr. Arthur Ponsonby, M.P., the son of a courtier himself, writes a book to show how aristocracy has deteriorated, and how useless it is to hope for really great achievements in any sphere of thought or action from its present representatives. His principal contention, with which most people—even aristocrats—will agree, is that the class has outlived its old functions and become purely ornamental where not vicious. Mr. Ponsonby does not damn the class utterly, however, for, after stating that "The modern aristocracy as a class having no outstanding qualities, and being entirely unrepresentative, and neither elected nor selected, falls very short of any ideal," he goes on to show that it possesses certain inherent elements which are capable of and worth maintaining and developing. Then the home and the public school receive castigation. The former because the children are too frequently looked upon as nuisances, and the care and attention which the mother should lavish upon them is delegated to some paid servant—competent or incompetent; whilst the latter is severely handled for turning out boys who are "for the most part ill-educated and saturated with class prejudice, which is the one thing they are really successfully taught." This matter of school training Mr. Ponsonby considers the weakest point in the aristocrats' scheme of things, and the final chapter of his instructive book is devoted to an appeal to British aristocrats to face the facts of the situation, realise that the game of aristocracy is played out, and justify their existence as men before making special claims to be treated as over-men. "It is not the aristocrat, but the man, who is wanted, inasmuch as all hands are wanted for the unending work there is to be done."

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